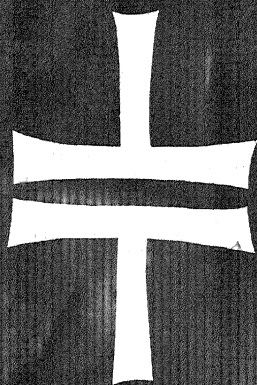


"ABRAHAM IS CALLED OUR FATHER.
SPIRITUALLY WE ARE SEMITES."
AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN SCHOLARS
EXAMINE SOME IMPLICATIONS OF
THESE WORDS OF PIUS XI.

THE BRIDGE



A YEARBOOK OF
JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES IV

Edited by JOHN M. OISTERREICHER

THE BRIDGE

A YEARBOOK OF JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Vol. V

Jews and Christians cannot ignore each other. Both call Abraham their father, certain that they believe as he believed, but their creeds are not the same. Both address the same God, see in man His image, rejoice in grace, dread sin, desire redemption, and look toward the world to come. Though their visions of God and man, their thoughts on grace, sin, redemption, and the life to be vary, and are at times irreconcilable, a hasty division of their beliefs into opposites is likely to obscure rather than illumine their disagreements and hamper their communication.

One of the most frequent confrontations between Christianity and Judaism sees the issue between human life of fear versus love or law versus grace. The present volume inquires into the rightness or wrongness of this distinction. Thus the love of God in the Christian and Jewish traditions has been made its unifying theme.

Contributors from many lands—Austria, Canada, England, Germany, the Fiji Islands, Italy, and the United States—investigate the role of love in the Old Testament, in the parables of Christ, in the Song of Songs, in

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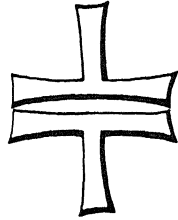
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THE BRIDGE



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A YEARBOOK OF
JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

VOLUME IV

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PANTHEON BOOKS

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Ernst Fuchs: Moses Before the Burning Bush
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 The Assumption of Mary
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INTRODUCTION

JEWS and Christians cannot ignore each other. Their agreements and disagreements are so deep that apathy toward them and toward one another would be a greater wrong than some of the hostile disputes of the past. For the silencing of passion—that insensibility of heart the Stoics assumed to be the highest condition of man—is neither a Christian nor a Jewish virtue. Christians and Jews alike call Abraham their father, certain that they believe as he believed, but their creeds are not the same. Though Church and Synagogue trace their origins to the *magnalia Dei*—the “great and terrible things” (Deut 10:21) God worked for the Israel of old in the days of the Exodus—they have moved in different directions. Both address the same God, see in man His image, rejoice in grace, dread sin, desire redemption, and look toward the world-to-come. Yet their visions of God and man, their thoughts on grace, sin, redemption, and life-to-be do not only vary, at times they are irreconcilable. And there is Jesus. For Christians He is, to use Isaiah’s phrase, a sanctuary, while for Jews He has remained a stone of offense (see 8:14).

Akin and apart, Jews and Christians cannot ignore each other. Even though they frequently differ to the point of contradiction, a hasty division of their beliefs into opposites obscures rather than illumines their disagreements and hampers their conversation. A Christian may be tempted to see in the traditional Jew nothing but a literalist who does not look beyond the letter of Scripture and Talmud, while a Jew may think of the Christian as a dreamer who ignores the letter in favor of imaginative interpretations. Both groupings are false; they distort the Christian as well as the Jewish attitude toward letter and spirit. Likewise, simply to call the Church a usurper of the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Synagogue a miser unwilling to share Israel’s privileges, helps only those who do not seek to understand the differences but prefer to widen and perpetuate them.

There are other deceptively neat classifications. None is more often

repeated than the one distinguishing the New Covenant from the Old as the covenant of love and forgiveness from that of fear and vengeance. There is also the attempt to set Judaism against Christianity as sheer legalism that knows little of the joy of service and nothing of friendship with God. Legalism is as much a travesty of Jewish devotion to the Law as license is of that freedom in which St. Paul sees the calling of Christians, the splendor of God's children (see Rom 8:21). Yet, it is true that the role attributed to the Law, to the Law of Moses and to law as the guiding principle of life, divides Church and Synagogue. A rabbi of the end of the third century A.D. was able to say that the Lord loves the houses in which the legal traditions are studied more than those in which services are held and sermons preached for the people's edification. Another rabbi of the same period could add: "Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, blessed be He, has nothing in this world but the four cubits of Halachah," the circumscribed realm of talmudic elaboration on biblical law that regulates the life of a Jew from morning till night and year after year, that governs his relationship to God and that to his fellow (see Ber. 8a).

In keeping with these thoughts of Rabbis Hisda, 'Ulla, and Hiyya ben Ammi, even a contemporary writer like Dr. Taubes defines the issue between Judaism and Christianity as that of law: "Christian theology is based on Christology, which means that all things, human and divine, achieve relevance only as they relate to Jesus the Christ. Judaism, based on the Law, grants relevance to all things, human and divine, only as they relate to Halachah." (*Commentary*, XVI, December 1953, 532.) In this he is right, but he is less right when he continues: "The controversy between the Jewish and Christian religions points to the perennial conflict between the principle of law and the principle of love. The 'yoke of the Law' is challenged by the enthusiasm of love. But the 'justice of the Law' may, in the end, be the only challenge to the arbitrariness of love." (*Ibid.*, p. 533.) True love is never arbitrary. And the yoke of a law minutely directing man's every action may well cause him to rebel, not only against the law but also against its giver.

Sharp distinctions have an important place in man's knowledge and understanding; they have a particular place in the conversation between Jews and Christians. But if distinctions are drawn so sharply

as to disregard the complexities of both the Jewish and the Christian positions, and if they are repeated again and again till they become stereotypes, they contribute very little. Were I not convinced that man's liking for stereotypes, for oversimplifications, is as strong as his attachment to sin, I would predict the death of certain prejudices by the force of several studies in this volume. Still, I hope that many readers will find in them new insights. The masterly study on "Liberty and Law," though not directly concerned with the propaganda image of St. Paul as the victim of Hellenistic influences, as an inwardly torn man hating himself and his people, should convince everyone who lends his ear to Father Lyonnet's argument that the Apostle was in no way a man of hidden rancor. There was no contempt in him for Torah, quite the opposite. The Christ of glory, whom he had seen in a flash at Damascus and to whose words he must have listened during long hours of study and meditation in the desert, taught him that all law was only a beginning whose end was freedom, and that the Law imposed on Israel amid the stirrings of the elements could have no nobler fulfillment than to make room for the stirrings of the Spirit. To be impelled by this inner dynamism of love is the height of the Christian vocation. Again, Father Brennan's investigations of the rabbinical teachings about the three roads of love and Sister Raffaella's essay on "The Duties of Hearts"—a medieval work whose influence among Jews might best be compared with that of the *Imitatio Christi* among Christians—lay open some of the richness of the Jewish tradition. Deep though the differences between Christians and Jews are, the great Jewish teachers of the inner life hold with its Christian masters that there is no higher rung on the ladder to perfection than the love of Him who loved us first, and that man fails his vocation unless his heart and his flesh sing to the living God (see Ps 83[84]:3).

Even more persistent than labels defining the dissent between Church and Synagogue are slogans that pretend to tell, in a word or two, the distinction between the two Covenants. More than nineteen centuries ago—only about a hundred years after the first Pentecost—a priest, by the name of Marcion, appeared in Rome to propagate his ideas that the Law and the Gospel were irreconcilable and that the God of the Jews, the "just God," was totally different from the "good God," the Father of Jesus Christ. Marcion's doctrine was condemned and he cut off from communion with the Church; never-

theless, his doctrine of a radical opposition between Old and New Testaments has its followers to this very day. Time and again, one can hear men who should know better speak of the God of wrath and of the God of pardon, as if pardon had been unknown in the Ancient Dispensation and as if judgment were foreign to the New; as if the God of Christians were another than the unrivaled, uncompromising God of Israel. No doubt, the two Covenants are not identical, but they form a marvelous continuum. Both are manifestations of the same divine care for man. Though the world had to wait for an apostle to utter the breathtaking words: "God is love" (1 Jn 4:9), he could not have spoken them had not, long before, the psalmist been made to proclaim that the Lord was his shepherd, his light and salvation (see 22[23]:1; 26[27]:1).

The word itself may not appear, still love is written all across the page that records Abraham's plea with his and the world's Judge to spare the doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their just (see Gen 18:22-32). It is written, too, across the page that takes us to the mountain where Elijah, man of zeal, found his Lord in neither fire nor wind nor earthquake (see 3 Kg 18:11-12). Who is this God who can be encountered only in a gentle whisper, in the voice of silence, who is ready to bear with a multitude of sinners for the sake of a handful of upright men, if not the same God we meet in the Gospels? None of the severity the Old Testament relates, none of the harshness the ancient Israel shared with her neighbors—after all, God chose as His witness and instrument not ageless spirits but a people of flesh and blood, located in time and space—none of these can justify any degrading of God's bond with Israel. Into this union Jesus was born, from it His humanity received nourishment and strength; it would be giving small honor to Him, then, were one to discredit the Covenant that was nurse of His mind and will.

Whatever else was lacking in the Ancient Dispensation, never absent was the revelation of love. In her essay, "The God of Israel, God of Love," originally a lecture given at one of this Institute's Scripture symposia, Mother Sullivan speaks of Yahweh as the Lord of history. The sacred events, through which the chosen people lived, were the disclosure of His saving design. History's secret and power are the mercy, the steadfast love of Him who is its prime mover, its beginning and its end, the God who acts and speaks, creates and re-

creates. It is this experience of God's love that the books of the Old Testament state, hymn, and proclaim. Thus the great *Hallel*, that noble litany of thanksgiving, could resound through the Temple of old:

*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,
for His mercy endures forever.*

(Ps 135[136]:1)

Ki l'olam hasedo, "for His grace, His covenant love, lasts forever," is not only the refrain with which the pilgrims to the Holy City answered the appeal of a chanter, it is the refrain of the Old Testament itself in which king, prophet, and people join (see 1 Par 16:34, 41; 2 Par 5:13; 7:6; 20:11; and others). When Jeremiah foretold that in the then deserted Jerusalem the sound of worshippers bringing thank offerings to the house of the Lord would be heard again, he linked their praise to cries of joy and gladness, to the voices of bridegroom and bride (see 33:11).

The prophet's hope for the voices of bridegroom and bride to ring out again reminds one immediately of that most unusual of Old Testament books, the Song of Songs. That love tunes, songs of utter delight in the beauty of a man's and of a woman's body, airs celebrating the passion of a maiden and the conquest of a youth, should carry another melody—the melody of God's love for His people and of their love for Him, indeed, that of His dealings with the whole of mankind—must be shocking to those who wish to sever the world of the spirit from that of the senses. To Scripture, however, the theme of the Song of Songs is basic. Divine love fills the universe; the flesh has a sacramental quality that enables it to become the bearer of grace; things created cry out to their Creator till God vests in the body of a man and in the elements of the earth. As the name of God goes unpronounced throughout the Song of Songs, so the Song speaks of the Incarnation without speaking of it. It is the perfect hyphen binding the Old Testament to the New and the perfect medium in which the new man, redeemed by the blood of Christ, can pour out the most intimate love of his heart. As Dr. Ulanov in his study "The Song of Songs: The Rhetoric of Love" shows so well, without this duet between lover and beloved the Christian mystics would frequently be deprived of speech. Their highest joys would go unsung and their deepest experiences unrecorded.

The two Testaments are inseparable. Any attempt to tear them apart, even though it be done unconsciously, violates their deepest meaning. To read, for instance, the parables of Jesus as if they taught the banishment of the Jewish people from the sight of God is to *misread* them. In her paper on the parables, Dame Mirjam Prager makes apparent that they do not gainsay the title St. Paul gives to the Israel according to the flesh: Dear to God for the sake of the fathers (see Rom 11:28). How could they? Though revelation is of many parts, it is of one piece. True, Jesus' parables rebuke but they do not reject. They warn, they threaten, as did the appeals of the prophets, but the judgment they both announce springs from love and leads to it. There is no man to picture a gloomier future than Jeremiah, yet it is he who calls the desolate people "virgin Israel," assuring her of God's everlasting love, of His never-waning favor, promising her deliverance and restoration of her beauty (see 31:3, 4, 7). To Jews and to Christians who think that the Lord has forsaken the people He once chose and, no less, to the many today who have forgotten *Him*, He says through the mouth of another prophet:

*Can a mother forget her infant,
 be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
 Even should she forget,
 I will never forget you.
 See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name.*
 (Is 49:15-16)

This prophetic vision is also the Christian way of looking at history, and the only vision to yield true understanding of the relationship between Church and Synagogue. Though history is filled with tears, it will have a happy ending; though the story of man and of his salvation is drama, it is not a tragedy but a *divina commedia*.

The reader who has stayed with me has long realized the theme around which this fourth volume of *The Bridge* revolves: Love in the Old Testament and in the New, love in both the Christian and the Jewish traditions. I can safely leave it to him to tie in all the other essays, be they on the Inquisition or current events, on the Jewish marriage ceremony or the veneration of the Torah by the popes, on literary figures or saints. It will be obvious to him that the love treated here in such variety—though far from adequately, since the love of

God can never be spoken of as it ought—compels Christians and Jews not to ignore each other.

DOES "not to ignore each other" say all that ought to be said? The same enraptured apostle who saw God as Love wrote: "If anyone says: 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar" (1 Jn 4:20). Hence I would be remiss were I to conclude this introduction to a volume on love without recording two recent events that have momentous bearing on the relationship between Christians and Jews. The first is a word of welcome by Pope John XXIII, the second a prayer of the Catholic bishops of Germany.

In October 1960, representatives of the United Jewish Appeal paid homage to Pope John. They gratefully remembered his wartime efforts to tear as many victims as he could from the clutches of their persecutors. To the salutation of his visitors the Pope responded with an affectionate greeting of his own, overcome with joy like Joseph, who had found his brethren after a long separation. "I am Joseph, your brother" (Gen 45:4), he declared, thus reaching out to those around him and to Jews everywhere. He then continued:

True, there is a great difference between one who accepts only the Old Testament and one who joins to it as supreme law and guide the New. This distinction, however, does not suppress the brotherhood that springs from their common origin, for we are all sons of the same heavenly Father; among us all there must ever be the brightness of love and its practice.

Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine, "Thou has put over us, O Lord, the light of thy countenance." This radiant truth of Psalm 4 makes us understand what is meant by genuine help, by true human solidarity. Such solidarity will, indeed, bring closer the solution of many problems that harass the world and will unite all men in that fundamental reality: We come from the Father, we shall return to the Father.

(*L'Osservatore Romano*, October 19, 1960.)

Never before was it so clearly stated that the bond between Christians and Jews is woven of two strong threads, one being creation, the other sacred history. In greeting his visitors: "I am Joseph, your brother," Pope John spoke as a man, for Joseph is his own first name. At the same time, he spoke in the name of Christ, for to the fathers of the Church Joseph, loved, humbled, and raised, is a type of Christ.

Another declaration I should like to record, indeed, to highlight, is that of the Catholic bishops of Germany, issued at the end of May 1961:

Gathered at Bühl [for their spring deliberations], the German bishops reviewed, among other things, the questions raised by the Eichmann trial. They noted that German Catholics are following it with great earnestness and are deeply struck by the fact that so terrifying an injustice could have been committed by men who were part of our people.

The stirring testimonies at the trial force us to ponder anew what it was that made that horrible desecration of human dignity, that destruction of countless human lives, possible. These things happened because the political leadership of our people presumed to abrogate the eternal laws of God.

Our people must try everything humanly possible to make amends for the injustice done to the Jewish people and to other peoples. Though material restitution is necessary, it alone does not suffice. The bishops, therefore, call on German Catholics to implore, in a spirit of repentance, God's forgiveness for the sins committed by members of our people but also to beg for the spirit of peace and reconciliation. At the same time, the bishops appeal to the initiative of priests and laymen to join, as far as possible, visible signs of expiation to their prayers.

Most urgently, the bishops call on all men and women on whom the responsibility for our nation rests today, in conscience to resist every new attempt to do away with God's commandments, every attempt to jeopardize again the dignity and the rights of men.

Those who help form public opinion should keep alive in the consciousness of our people, and particularly in that of our youth, the memory of those selfless women and men who in the dark hours of our history, at the risk of their own lives, helped the persecuted and often suffered with them unto death.

(Katholische Nachrichten-Agentur, May 31, 1961, No. 39/61.)

With this appeal, the bishops published an extraordinary prayer for the murdered Jews and their persecutors, which they ordered to be said in all the Catholic churches of Germany on Sunday, June 11. It should add a new dimension to the lives of many Christians.

Lord, God of our fathers! God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob! Father of mercy and God of all consolation! Thou didst receive Israel thy servant and didst send to him and all men Jesus Christ thy Son as the

Redeemer. Though He was without guilt, thou didst deliver Him for our sake so that, through Him, we might all be delivered.

We confess before thee: Countless men were murdered in our midst because they belonged to the people from which comes the Messiah, according to the flesh.

We pray thee: Lead all those among us who became guilty through deed, omission, or silence that they may see their wrong and turn from it. Lead them so that they examine themselves, be converted, and atone for their sins. In thy limitless mercy forgive, for the sake of thy Son, that limitless guilt no human atonement can wipe out.

May the example of those who strove to help the persecuted and resist the persecutors become a power among us.

Comfort the mourners, calm the embittered, the lonely, and the sick. Heal the wounds that have been inflicted on souls. Make us, and all men, understand more and more that we must love each other as thy Son loved us.

Give to the murdered thy peace in the land of the living. May their death, unjustly suffered, be to their salvation through the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, who with thee lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

THE EDITOR

STUDIES

Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL, GOD OF LOVE

FIVE HUNDRED years before the birth of Christ, when Tze-kung asked his master Confucius for one word that could guide his life through all its days, the great Chinese sage told him: "Is not *shu*, fellow-feeling, the word? Do not do to others what you would not like done to yourself."¹ Another disciple, Tseng Tze, explained his master's way as *chung* and *shu*, faithfulness and fellow-feeling.²

The Indian sage Yajñavalkya, about to leave home for a hermit's life, delayed his departure long enough to explain to one of his wives the role of love in the attainment of lasting happiness: "Verily, creatures are not dear that you may love creatures; but that you may love the Self through the creatures, therefore are creatures dear."³ For man to roam in the Absolute—the universal Soul—ancient Hindu thought required these four "sublime contemplations": *maitrī*, benevolence toward all creation; *karuṇa*, compassion toward the distressed; *mudita*, joy at the happiness of others, and *upekṣa*, indifference to their faults. To some of Buddha's followers, nirvana meant the destruction of all existence; to others, it was the triumph over non-self. Having attained this triumph, one need not shut one's eyes to the world, they held; one should rather offer light to others. Hence these beautiful words: "I would be a guard to them that have no protection; a guide unto the traveler; a ship, a well spring, a bridge for the seekers of that shore; I

1. Confucius, *The Analects*, XV, 23.

2. See *ibid.*, IV, 15. *Chung* and *shu* have been variously rendered by translators of *The Analects* as "loyalty" and "consideration" (Waley), "conscientiousness within" and "consideration for others" (Soothill), "being true to the principles of our nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others" (Legge), or "loyalty and reciprocity" (Ware). The terms "faithfulness" and "fellow-feeling" I adopted are those of Leonard A. Lyall in his *The Sayings of Confucius* (London: Longmans, Green, n.d.).

3. E. W. F. Tomlin, *The Great Philosophers: The Eastern World* (New York: Wyn, 1952), pp. 154-156.

would be a lamp to such as need a lamp, a bed for the weary that need a bed, the very slave of such as need service."⁴

In the Middle East, no less than in the Far East, there is proof of the reverence with which those outside the biblical orbit spoke of their love for other men and for their gods. Sumerian verses stamped on clay tablets, found at Nippur, praise human love.⁵ Egyptian papyri of the later empire attest that the presence of the loved one helps the sick more than potent remedies or collections of sacred texts, more than visits of the head physician or magic phrases of the priest.⁶ In the "Daily Prayer of the Hittite King" an appeal is made to Telepinus, so benevolent a god that the royal suppliant can say: "Of the oppressed, the lowly . . . thou art father, mother; the cause of the lowly, the oppressed, thou, Telepinus, dost take to heart."⁷ In the Cairo museum an old manuscript, written during the Twenty-first or Twenty-second Dynasty, that is between the eleventh and the eighth centuries B.C., bears instructive words set down by a father for his son; he is told not to neglect his god but always to pray "with a loving heart."⁸

The sacred books of China and India, the cuneiform and hieroglyphic texts of the Mediterranean world prove the great role of love in pagan life and worship. No doubt, the apex of pre-Christian thought on love is Plato's *Symposium*. In that dialogue, he assembled all that a great philosopher considered worth saying about love "in its spiritual sense, in its relation to well-being and, better still, in its function as mediator at the heart of being."⁹

THE MOVEMENT OF LOVE

FELLOW-feeling, benevolence, love powerful, joy-giving love, linking man with man and leading man to the higher world—what can the sacred books of the Jews and Christians add to what others seem to

4. Quoted from the "Bodhicaryāvatāra," by S. Radhakrishnan in *Indian Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), I, 580.

5. See Edward Chiera, "Sumerian Religious Texts, No. 23," quoted in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 496.

6. See A. H. Gardiner, *The Library of A. Chester Beatty* (London, 1931), XXVI, 34.

7. "Daily Prayer of the King," *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 397.

8. "The Instruction of Ani," *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 420.

9. Jean Guittton, *Essay on Human Love* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), p. 23.

have said so well? The answer may be disconcerting. Not love but rebellion, not love but murder, falsehood, incest, fornication abound in the pages of the Bible. Famine, drought, war, exile, are the grim sequence it records. Heartache, sorrow, loneliness are man's sorry lot, from generation to generation. So an undiscerning reader concludes. But the undiscerning reader is wrong.

He is wrong, not merely because crimes of every sort also dominate pagan life and literature. He is wrong, for in spite of the many failures of the children of Israel, and all their and our early ancestors, love, God's love for man and man's answering love for God, is at work from the first page of Genesis to the last page of the Apocalypse. There is no dichotomy between the Old Covenant and the New. The history of salvation unfolds between two visions of eternity: the vision of God's creative love in paradise and the vision of God's triumphant love in the heavenly city. Love links the first scene with the last.

Several Hebrew words seek to express this inexpressible love, for instance, the noun *'ahabab* and the adjective *rahum*. When used of God's love for man or man's for God, *'ahabab* is strong, dignified, unique in its power. Applied in a religious sense, it speaks of a love that unites, that endures, that never flinches. For man to love God means to serve Him; for God to love man means to elect him, to set him apart and give him all good things.¹⁰ *Rahum* is warmer. It means merciful and speaks of pity for those in need, sympathy for those in pain. It is affectionate, compassionate, friendly, trusting.¹¹

These two aspects meet and mingle and move through the story of God's love for man that is the Bible. Like a mighty river flowing by city, town, and village, this strong and tender love touches the whole of life, all moments grave and gay, and it moves on, making glad the city of God. Where words falter, music can be eloquent. *The Moldau*, one of Smetana's masterpieces, describes the highlands of Bohemia where the two sources of the river rise out of the earth. One is strong, steady,

10. See Gottfried Quell and Ethelbert Stauffer, *Love*, trans. J. R. Coates (New York: Harper, 1951), pp. 1, 32-34. The book is a translation of the authors' article in Gerhard Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 20-55. See also Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), p. 61.

11. See Quell and Stauffer, *op. cit.*, p. 1; also Claude Wiener, *Recherches sur l'amour de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Letouzy et Ane, 1957); J. Ruwet, "Misericordia et Justitia Dei in VT," *Verbum Domini*, XXV (1947), 35-42; Ceslaus Spicq, O.P., *Agapè* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1955).

determined; it starts on its long journey to the sea with a sturdy resolution no obstacle can arrest. The other springs brightly and merrily from its mountain bed; gaily it rushes along its stony way. With melodic brilliance and sustained power, the great Czech composer shows how the two streams come together, widen and deepen as they crash in cataracts or pause in fern-banked pools or hurry past woodlands where the hunter's horn rings out clear and true; move through villages where the tolling church bell tells of human loss; hasten past the green where dancers move to century-old folk tunes; dare the dark mysteries of the midnight forest; majestically survey the comforting sights of fields and homes and gardens, to reach at last the serried rows of the houses of Prague with all their human hopes and fears. Far beyond the city waits the sea, unmeasured and unknown, awesome and terrifying to those who have watched the flow of the Moldau and understood its symbolism: Strong and gentle, like its waters, are the ways of God's love.

Mighty and tender, love and mercy were an experience in Israel before they were a doctrine. This experience was gradual, and so was the unfolding of the plan of salvation. Slowly it was revealed to make development in both dogma and morals possible.¹² This is the way of divine dispensation: Man is bound by space and time. Creation and temporal succession are linked to one another, and distinguish the creature from God. Even within the limits of his knowledge, Aristotle was able to say: "He who examines the admirable works of nature knows that the fruit cannot ripen unless the seed and blossom precede, this succession, *akolouthia*, artistically guiding each thing to its fulfillment."¹³ *Akolouthia* has an ardent champion in St. Gregory of Nyssa:

It is without reason, O man, that you grieve and groan over the sequence of the necessary succession of things. You do not know towards what end the economy of the world is leading. It is necessary that all things progress in an orderly way [*akolouthia*], according to the artistic wisdom of the One who directs all, to be united with the divine nature.¹⁴

Time after time, God's love manifests itself in the Bible. This succession of events is not without meaning: Each marks an ordered ad-

12. See Heb 1:1; 1 Pet 1:10-11; *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 106, a. 3; II-II, q. 174, a. 6.

13. Aristotle, *Works*, XLVI, 547D.

14. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Anima et Resurrectione* (PG 46:105).

vance to an end. This end is God's undisputed reign, man's union with Him.

The *akolouthia* of God's love in the Old Testament can be unified under many themes: God's revelation of Himself as Lord or Law-giver or Father; God's demands on man in terms of faith or service; God's faithfulness as expressed in His attitude toward sin, retribution, conversion; God's victory as seen in exodus, kingship, messianism; God's plan as manifested in the divine election, the people of God, the covenant between God and man.¹⁵

THE COVENANTS

IN A way, the covenant theme subsumes all the others: It controlled the whole history of Israel and is consummated in the Church Christ founded. God elected a people, made them His own, dwelt in their midst, united Himself to them and prepared them for an even more blessed intervention.¹⁶ Two consequences of this tremendous mystery may be noted immediately: Israel's religion is historical and her history is religious. God is not a dim, distant, abstract supreme being, not the conclusion of a philosopher's syllogism. He is a Person, He is near, He acts in time, He creates and re-creates man, and His love can be known in an existential situation. Thus history is more than a succession of events, it is the disclosure of His saving design, a mystery of love and mercy. In the course of this history, God's covenants were first experienced and only later stated, hymned, proclaimed.

THE LORD SAID TO ABRAHAM

The history of Israel begins with a solemn promise. When the Lord appeared to Abraham and declared: "I will make a great nation of you. . . . In you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen 12:2-3), the first chapter opened in the long love story of the chosen people—the story of a frequently repeated divine summons and of a sometimes slow and often faltering human response. Abraham may have been surprised to learn of the Creator's predilection for His

15. See *Grands Thèmes Bibliques*, ed. J. Gilet (Paris: Editions de Feu Nouveau, 1958); an English translation is to be published (New York: Desclee) in the fall of 1961.

16. See Harold H. Rowley, *The Old Testament and Modern Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 331.

creature, yet Abraham's call was not the initial expression of friendship between God and man.

In the verbal images of Genesis, God is said to have walked and talked with our first parents, called to them when they hid from Him, promised to set right their mistakes, resolved to re-create in even greater love those whom His love had created. In the common symbols of thorn and thistle, bread and dust, in the offerings of crop and firstlings of flock, in the cosmic symbols of a flood of waters, of the unaltered course of seedtime and harvest, of cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, of a bow set in the clouds—in all these man could read the sequence of sin and punishment, the need for sacrifice, the promise of a new beginning and the pledge of a never-ending covenant made by God with all living, mortal creatures upon the earth.

From the earliest accounts of eastern Mediterranean civilization, it is clear that man's need of divine help was paralleled by a belief that the gods were unhappy without human worship. In Homer's Greece covenants between a man and a god were common: Cult was offered in exchange for protection. In the various writings of the Near East, the mutual needs of men and pagan deities are said to be satisfied by some form of alliance. But no matter what the similarities between them, the covenant into which Abraham entered differed from the covenants made by his neighbors in inception, nature, and consequences. The initiative came not from Abraham, but from God. Like all subsequent covenants uniting Israel with her Creator, the divine intervention was a sovereign gift, not a bilateral contract. Appropriate here are words better known in another context: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (Jn 15:16).

God's gesture was not an answer to Israel's plea, neither was it a recognition of her good conduct and exceptional merits. "It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the Lord set His heart on you and chose you, for you are really the smallest of all nations. It was because the Lord loved you . . ." (Deut 7:7-8). This uncompromising address by the Lawgiver plainly disposed of any such self-gratifying illusion. It prepared Israel to acknowledge her unworthiness of God's love and to accept the moral obligations that the divine election imposed. The terms of the covenant were clearly these: Only if the Israelites loved Him and walked in His ways (see Deut 30:16) would the Lord of hosts be on their side; only if they did what was right and

good in His sight (see 6:18) would they experience the blessedness of His power, would they know and see the whole impact of His loving promises fulfilled.

The prodigious consequences of the covenant were the object of the Lord's solemn oath to Abraham. A mysterious rite, widely revered in his day, sealed the sacred engagement: Abraham was plunged into a deep and awesome sleep, and in the darkness of ecstasy discerned the Lord moving, in the form of a flaming torch, between the animals he had immolated (see Gen 15:7).¹⁷ Circumcision, he was told, would be for him and for his descendants the sign of this covenant. In their blood they were to be "baptized," in their flesh marked as the Lord's own, into their bodies was cut the obligation to serve Him. Circumcision was to be a divine pledge that they would share in the covenant's blessings according to the measure of their fidelity to its demands.¹⁸

THE LORD SAID TO MOSES

The day came when the Lord spoke to Moses (see Ex 3; 4:1-17) and another when, through His spokesman Moses, He called upon Abraham's descendants to make the patriarch's engagement their own. Egypt was a memory, Canaan a hope, the desert a present reality. Thunder, lightning, the trembling of the earth beneath their feet proclaimed the majesty of the wholly Other. To Him they pledged obedience: "All that the Lord has said, we will heed and do" (Ex 24:7) and ratified their pact with a solemn sacrifice and ritual meal (see Ex 24:4-8, 11).¹⁹

17. From Assyria, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome come accounts of similar ceremonies. Livy suggests a plausible interpretation when he relates that a Roman envoy warned the Albans with whom he was making a treaty: "If the Roman people first are unfaithful to this contract . . . may Jupiter strike them as I myself today shall strike this pig." Whereupon he killed the pig (I, 24). Yet there is not even a hint of a threat in Gen 15; on the contrary, there is every expression of God's goodness and Abraham's future greatness and happiness.

18. The narrative of God's covenant with Abraham comes to us in two forms. The first is the account of the covenant rite, possession of the land of Canaan is promised to the patriarch's descendants, no obligation is imposed (see Gen 15:6-20). In the second account no rite is mentioned but God changes the patriarch's name from Abram to Abraham and assures him of many descendants. Abraham, on his side, is expected to lead a blameless life and to accept circumcision for himself and his male descendants (see Gen 17).

19. Passages attributed to the Yahwistic tradition identify the site as Sinai (see, for instance, Ex 19:11, 18; 34:4), as does the priestly code (see, for instance, Ex 19:1). The Elohist tradition and the Deuteronomist speak of Horeb (see Ex 33:6 and Deut 1:2, 6, 19). See Marcel Haelvoet, "La théophanie du Sinaï, analyse littéraire des récits d'Ex., xix-xxiv," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, XXIX (1953), 374-397.

Singular proofs of God's favor had preceded this sacred moment.²⁰ He had spoken to their leader Moses, made him His prophet, given him the power to work wonders; He had rescued His people from Pharaoh's dominion, guarded them by day and by night, and made clear the meaning of all that He had done:

You have seen for yourselves how I treated the Egyptians and how I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself. Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

(Ex 19:4-6)

Their role was a privileged one, carrying obligations as well as honors. Each of the pentateuchal traditions refers differently to the duties imposed by Israel's bond with God, but whether we read of the Ten Commandments (see Ex 20:1-17), the covenant code (see 20:22-23:19) or of cultic laws (see 34:17-26), we know that the people of God was meant lovingly to hear and heed His word, to carry out His will with eager heart. He was to be the *melek*, the king, the center of their camp (see Ex 15:8; 17:15). He was to be the warrior-hero who would lead them into battle (see Ex 17:16). He was the ruler of the whole earth, and yet to one portion of it He gave His special love: The people of Israel was made His *segullab*, His own treasure, a people set apart.²¹

20. Did divine condescension go so far as to reveal the meaning of the divine name? Myles M. Bourke concludes, after an examination of the pertinent literature, that Moses was given an insight into the great biblical message that Israel's God is a "hidden God" (Is 45:15) who is incomprehensible and ineffable. "By love may He be gotten and holden; but by thought never." ("Yahweh, the Divine Name," *The Bridge*, III, 287.)

21. The theme of the election of Israel is closely connected with that of the covenant. Both are expressions of the initiative of love. Each renewal was a reaffirmation of this fact. According to Deut 28:69, the covenant was renewed when Moses led the people to the land of Moab, east of the Jordan. The clauses of this covenant are believed to be laws given in Deut 12-26. As Johannes Pedersen observes, covenant is the most appropriate term to describe Yahweh's relation to Israel: "This denotes the psychic communion and the common purpose which united the people and its God. It is also expressed by saying that the peace of Yahweh reigns in Israel (*shalom*, Jer 16:5); therefore the relation between them is characterized by love, the feeling of fellowship among kinsmen. The covenant finds expression in the nature and customs of the people. By observing this *mishpat*, Israel maintains the covenant, but a departure from true custom, to which in the first place would belong intercourse with other gods, is a breach of the covenant." (*Israel*, London: Oxford University Press, 1953, IV, 612.)

THE LORD SAID TO JOSHUA

After Moses, the Lord's servant, had died, the Lord spoke to Joshua who had been Moses' aide:

Prepare to cross the Jordan here, with all the people, into the land I will give the Israelites. . . . I will be with you as I was with Moses: I will not leave you nor forsake you. . . . I command you: be firm and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go.

(1:2, 5, 9)

Into a rich and beautiful land, then, Joshua led his people, into the land the Lord had promised. If we follow the idealized portrayal of Israel's conquest as given in the book of Joshua, neighboring powers were weak and did little to hamper their advance. Coalitions of Canaanite kings are pictured as unable to resist tribes made strong by a common purpose and loyal to the alliance they renewed at Shechem, in the pivotal pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Yet, even if the conquest of Canaan was not as swift and thorough as a first reading of the book of Joshua might indicate, it was a sign of God's fidelity.

It was this fidelity that raised Joshua as a leader for Israel. A man not to compromise, he stated the case plainly:

Take great care . . . to love the Lord, your God. . . . If you transgress the covenant of the Lord, your God, which He enjoined on you, serve other gods and worship them, the anger of the Lord will flare up against you and you will quickly perish from the good land which He has given you. . . . Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him completely and sincerely.

And the people answered:

Far be it from us to forsake the Lord for the service of other gods. For it was the Lord, our God, who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, out of a state of slavery. He performed those great miracles before our very eyes and protected us along our entire journey and among all the peoples through whom we passed. . . . Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.²²

(23:12, 16; 24:14, 16-18)

22. See Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 92. It is possible that this covenant was an extension of the Mosaic covenant to clans who had not been present at Sinai. (See *Le Livre de Josué*, trans. F.-M. Abel, O.P., Paris: Cerf, 1958, p. 104.)

THE WORK OF KINGS AND SCRIBES

More than once this scene was to be repeated. Though the Lord had spoken to David His servant; though He had taken him from shepherding his father's sheep to be a leader over His people; though He had been with him wherever he went; though He had promised to establish the throne of His kingdom forever; though He had allowed David's son, Solomon, to build a temple where His majesty and love did dwell; and though the Lord had done all this and more, some of David's successors gave to strange gods the honor and worship that was the Lord's alone (see 2 Kg 7:8-16; 3 Kg 6:1-2). Time and again, weak and wicked kings turned the land that was God's gift to His beloved people and meant to be a province of loving submission, into a haven for idolatry. Yet time and again, the spell of false gods was broken by those who remembered the word of the living God.

When, for instance, in the eighth century B.C., the priest Jehoiada ordered the idolatrous and murderous queen Athaliah slain, he made a covenant between the Lord, Joash, the seven-year-old king, and the people so that they should truly be the people of the Lord. The worship of the One God was restored, the shrine of baal destroyed, its altars and statues shattered, and baal's priest killed (see 4 Kg 11:1-18; 2 Par 23:8-17).²³ Two centuries later Josiah, another descendant of David, again renewed the people's pledge to live by the covenant, promising to walk in the way of the Lord, to keep His commandments and observe His statutes with all his heart and all his soul. And all the people, both small and great, priests and prophets, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all of Judah signified their assent and promised to live according to the Law bequeathed them by their forefathers (see 4 Kg 23:2-3).²⁴

Another two centuries later, Ezra assembled the people in a public square in Jerusalem and read to them the "book of the law of Moses" (2 Esd 8:1). The Persians were then supreme in Israel.²⁵ Ezra, a priest

23. There is an allusion to a second covenant, between the king and the people, in 4 Kg 11:17, but the text of 2 Par 23:16 seems better preserved.

24. This renewal followed the discovery of "the book of the law" (4 Kg 22:8). The words of "the book of the covenant" Josiah ordered read in the Temple (4 Kg 23:2) were probably the law codes of Deut 12-26. (See *Le Deutéronome*, trans. H. Cazelles, P.S.S., 2nd ed.; Paris: Cerf, 1958, p. 17.)

25. Much has been written about the return of Nehemiah and the mission of Ezra. See Paul Heinisch, *History of the Old Testament*, trans. William Heidt, O.S.B. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1952), pp. 326-334; Giuseppe Ricciotti,

learned in "the law of the God of heaven" (1 Esd 7:21), had come to enforce, with the support of Persian authority, the long-neglected covenant obligations. From early morning until noon, he stood on a specially constructed platform reading from the Law, while the Levites at his side explained its meaning (see 2 Esd 8:4-9). Not only did the Israelites listen to the solemn reading of the Law, they acknowledged their sins and willingly submitted to cultic and social reforms. And on the Feast of Tabernacles, the representative leaders signed a binding covenant, set their seal unto it, while everyone who had knowledge and understanding supported them, taking an oath to walk in God's law (see 2 Esd 9:38-10:29).²⁶

Before the men and women, their sons and daughters, promised to keep themselves undefiled from pagan ways, Ezra proclaimed that God alone was the Lord, He who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and who gives life to all living creatures; it was He who chose Abraham, delivered the enslaved from Egypt, and came down on Sinai. Though He had done all this, Ezra confessed, the Israelites did not remember the wonders they had seen but hardened their necks, wishing to return to their former bondage.

*But thou, a forgiving God,
Gracious, and merciful,
Long-suffering, and full of compassion,
Didst not forsake them.*

(2 Esd 9:17)

As their children and their children's children, Ezra continued, multiplied and prospered, they again provoked God's wrath, throwing His law behind their backs and killing the prophets. Only when they were given into the hands of their enemies did they cry to God. And again they were saved.

*In thy very many mercies
Thou didst not utterly consume them,
Nor forsake them:
Because thou art a merciful and gracious God.*

(2 Esd 9:31)

History of Israel, trans. Clement della Penta, O.P., and Richard T. A. Murphy, O.P. (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1955), II, 137-139. See also Charles C. Torrey, *The Chronicler's History of Israel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. xxv.

26. Mention must also be made of a covenant concluded with the tribe of Levi (see Deut 33:9; Num 18:19; Jer 33:20-22; Mal 2:1-9) and with the house of David (see 2 Kg 23:5; 7:8-17; Ps 88:4-5; Is 16:5).

THE VOICE OF THE PROPHETS

With the prophets, even before the exile and the return under Ezra, the long instruction of the chosen people entered its most important phase. Divine love had been found true by patriarchs, by wanderers in the wilderness, by pioneers in Palestine, by members of the first amphictyonies; it was found true by citizens of a unified kingdom, by brothers dwelling in a land divided, by exiles heartsick beside foreign shores, as it was to be later by the chastened members of the second commonwealth. Time had not only proved God's faithfulness, it had also disclosed new dimensions in the covenantal bond.²⁷ The *anawim*, the poor of Yahweh, who in their "poverty" of soul depended on no one but Him, were quick to discover these new values and the basis of a life of poverty and prayer. Having nothing, they turned with childlike confidence to Him who possessed all. They never ignored or denied the juridical aspects of the covenant but they looked beyond the sign to the reality signified. They gave trust and received mercy. Their misery was an additional reason to hope in Him.²⁸

The experience of this mercy and well-placed hope led to a deeper insight into God's love, which the prophets sought to express in new images. Hosea describes the bond uniting Israel to her God under the figure of marriage; the words he uses have covenantal overtones:

*So I will allure her;
I will lead her into the desert
and speak to her heart. . . .
She shall respond there as in the days of her youth,
when she came up from the land of Egypt.*

27. Certain critics allege that the pre-exilic prophets knew nothing of the covenant. It is true that an examination of their writings provides no long list of texts containing this word. When *berit* does occur, it refers, the critics maintain, exclusively to the solemn act, not to the relations engendered by the act. For an interesting analysis of this subject see P. van Imschoot, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Tournai: Desclée, 1954), I, 252-254.

28. See Albert Gelin, "Heureux les pauvres," *Grands Thèmes Bibliques*, pp. 79-83. In this short chapter all the pertinent texts concerning the *anawim* are assembled and the history of these privileged souls is skillfully summarized. Poverty which had once been a sociological problem was later recognized as a spiritual qualification. It became a synonym for piety. Jeremiah was the patron of the *anawim*, Job the literary model of their dialogue with God. On the shores of the Dead Sea, the Qumranites tried to fashion their lives according to this teaching. On the Mount of Beatitudes, Jesus blessed and promised the poor a great reward. (See also Albert Gelin, *Les pauvres de Yahvé*, Paris: Cerf, 1953.)

*On that day, says the Lord,
she shall call me "My husband." . . .*

(2:16-18)

Because of His covenant with Israel, God, like a faithful husband, will have pity on her who is unpitied, the prophet explains; He will again say to the Israelites: "My people!" and Israel shall answer "My God!" (2:23-24). No image, not even that of wedded love, is enough to describe God's bond with His people. Hence Hosea recalls a father's embrace of his son:

*Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
who took them in my arms;
I drew them with human cords,
with bands of love. . . .*

(11:3-4)

The book of Deuteronomy made clear that the covenant laws were neither the impositions of an exacting ruler nor the price grudgingly paid by a people needing protection; obedience to them was the grateful expression of love offered in return for multiplied proofs of the Lord's love.

For love of your fathers He chose their descendants and personally led you out of Egypt by His great power, driving out of your way nations greater and mightier than you, so as to bring you in and to make their land your heritage, as it is today. This is why you must now know, and fix in your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is no other. You must keep His statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you today. . . .

(4:37-40)

Such teaching transformed Israel's grasp of the nature of sin. It was more than an offense; it was a betrayal. It was more than the infringement of a precept; it was a failure to respond to an invitation of love. The Deuteronomist's teaching also opened the eyes of the people to the true nature of punishment. Frequently chastised for their waywardness and made subject to their enemies because of their infidelities, the people learned that to break the bond of love was to bring down suffering upon itself.

No one understood sin and punishment more clearly or explained them more poignantly than Jeremiah and no one saw with greater

vision that faithful observance of the covenant he knew pointed to a greater covenant of the future.

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt. . . . I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(31:31-33)

Loving service, freely given, will make obedience to the new covenant an unreserved donation of self.

Ezekiel, too, uses several images to hail God's pledge. God's love is as tender as a bridegroom's for his bride (see 16:8-14), as solicitous as a shepherd's for his flock: "I will appoint one shepherd over them to pasture them, my servant David. . . . I will make a covenant of peace with them. . . . Thus they shall know that I, the Lord, am their God, and they are my people, the house of Israel, says the Lord God" (34:23, 25, 30).

The Shepherd-to-come is David, another David, one who will accomplish the messianic mission promised to the king. His work will be one of peace. Thus the Second Isaiah speaks of the days of the Messiah as an era of unalloyed happiness, a fulfillment of the pledge of love:

*Though the mountains leave their place
and the hills be shaken,
My love shall never leave you
nor my covenant of peace be shaken,
says the Lord, who has mercy on you. . . .
Come to me heedfully,
listen, that you may have life.
I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,
the benefits assured to David.*

(54:10; 55:3)

THE MYSTERY OF CREATION

THERE is found in Scripture the art of plural melody musicians call counterpoint, an interplay of themes, which gives its message not only

a dimension of depth but overtones of transcendent beauty. So far I have been tracing the melody of divine love as expressed in the history of the chosen people. This is basic. God is revealed by the sacred writers as the Lord of history. The children of Israel were conscious that they were a people set apart and that God had shown Himself to be their helper, their defender, not once but many times. Out of this experience of divine power in their history, there grew an ever deeper awareness of divine power in nature. Cosmic control had accompanied His intervention on their behalf; thus centuries of experience taught them that without this expression of might, the story of Israel's election and covenant would have been very different. As this understanding of God's activity in nature gave them new insight into the divine tenderness, so it suggests to us another melody moving through the sacred pages: God's love and the mystery of creation.²⁹

Three words are used in the scriptural affirmation of creative love; they are *bara*, *'asah*, *yazar*. The word *bara* means to shape, to create; it always refers to a divine activity, to God's work in fashioning the heavens and the earth or to His work in fashioning man and his heart:

*Lift up your eyes on high
and see who has created these:
He leads out their army and numbers them,
calling them all by name.
By His great might and the strength of His power
not one of them is missing!*

(Is 40:26)³⁰

This same recognition of God's power in the world of nature is found in the Psalms:

*Yours are the heavens, and yours is the earth;
the world and its fullness you have founded;
North and south you created;
Thabor and Hermon rejoice at your name.*
(88:12-13)

29. This whole theme has been made the subject of a thoughtful essay in biblical theology by Evode Beaucamp, O.F.M., *La Bible et le sens religieux de l'univers* (Paris: Cerf, 1959); see also Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., "The Theology of Creation in Second Isaias," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, XXI, 4 (October 1959), pp. 429-467.

30. See also Ex 34:10; Num 16:30; Ps 103:30; 147:5; Am 4:13.

Another verb, *ʿasah*, meaning "to do," "to make," is used by the prophets to awaken love for the Lord who has done so much for His people (see Jer 10:12; 27:5; 51:15). It also serves the psalmist to evoke wonder at the Lord whose power is everywhere (see 8:4, 7; 18:2; 94:5; 101:26). Lastly, there is *yazar*, "to fashion," "to model." Isaiah, for instance, makes use of it to describe the work of God's hands fashioning the earth, stretching over it the vast expanse of the heavens, shaping Israel, the people that is to tell His praise, or forming in the womb His servant who is to bring salvation to the ends of the earth (see 45:18; 43:21; 49:5).

Perhaps one name given to God, better than any other, shows how history and creation are related, indeed joined, in the divine plan. It is *Yahweh Zebaoth*. Most frequently it is translated "Lord God of hosts," sometimes "Lord God of armies," and can be found over and over in the historic books of the Bible, in the writings of the prophets as well as in the Psalms.³¹ The people turned to God as their leader in battle, thus the tribes of Israel could be called "my army" or "the hosts of Yahweh" (see Ex 7:4; 12:41). Yahweh led them out of Egypt and He would never fail to command them and bring them to victory. Were not all these wonders recorded in the "Book of the Wars of the Lord" (Num 21:14)?

Centuries passed, and the prophets invested this name with more than a military meaning. The priestly account of creation concludes with the statement that the heavens and the earth were finished and "all their army," "all their host" or "array"—a metaphorical expression to denote the totality of created beings the heavens and earth contained. *Yahweh Zebaoth* is the Creator of the universe and Guide of His people. Protecting the ranks of men and women who followed Moses into the desert and who crossed the Jordan under Joshua, He proved time and again that He ruled both history and nature.

The prophets never tire of proclaiming this twofold reign. Amos tells His people to be ready to meet its God:

*Him who formed the mountains, and created the wind,
and declares to man His thoughts;
Who made the dawn and the darkness,
and strides upon the heights of the earth:
The Lord, the God of hosts, by name.*

(4:13)

31. See B. Wambacq, *L'épithète divine Yahvé Seba'oth* (Paris: Desclée, 1947).

And in the book of Isaiah we read:

*For He who has become your husband is your Maker;
His name is the Lord of hosts;
Your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,
called God of all the earth.*

(54:5)

How could Israel doubt the power of His love? The covenant experience had taught her that God was the Lord of nature as well as of history. More than this, it had taught the chosen people that His attributes are "Almighty" and "All-loving," and that both are one.

THE MYSTERY OF WRATH

LOVE, it is true, is expressed in many ways in the Old Testament, but is it not equally true that the God of mercy is called the God of wrath? Can we ignore the fact that hate and violence are engraved upon its pages? Canaanites, Ammonites, Moabites, Amalekites were hostile to the descendants of Abraham; were not the descendants of Abraham hostile in their turn? More surprising, perhaps, is the hatred and violence of the just man. No doubt, a partial answer to this bewildering fact is that Israel's enemies were God's enemies. When they invaded Israel they were invading the inheritance given her by God, they were profaning His Temple, which He had chosen for His worship. It may be said that the violent outbursts of the just man against the sinners reflected his deep friendship for God. Yet, whatever explanations we try to find for man's conduct in the Old Testament, it is far harder to explain the unexpected manifestations of divine anger.

Is God the God of wrath or of love? Is He a father or a tyrant? And if He is a father, why does He make so many demands upon His children, and why does He allow so many horrors in the world He has fashioned for those whom He has called the children of His love?

"Conflict, like love, is engraved in our deepest being."³² Hatred, sadness, despair, fear, anger—according to St. Thomas they are all rooted in love. Hatred owes its origin to the avoidance of evil, and evil is anything that is opposed to the object of our love. Sadness arises

32. Philippe de la Trinité, O.C.D., "God of Wrath or God of Love?" *Love and Violence*, ed. Bruno de Jesus-Marie, O.C.D. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954), p. 123; see also Fidelis Buck, S.J., *Die Liebe Gottes beim Propheten Osee* (Rome: Tipografia Pio X, 1953), pp. 80-85.

when the person or thing we love seems to elude us. Despair grips us when they seem beyond our grasp forever. Fear seizes us when the beloved is in danger; anger, when our struggle for his favor is frustrated, when our pleas are ignored and our gifts cast aside.³³

To answer the questions, whether the God of Israel is the God of wrath or of love and how man's suffering can be reconciled to God's goodness, it is necessary to reject the alleged tensions on which they are based. There can never be any conflict between divine love and divine severity: Love must always be opposed to what is contrary to love. Nor can there be any conflict between divine love and divine power: Love must always employ all the resources at its command to protect what it holds dear. The biblical examples of divine jealousy and divine wrath are not the clumsy anthropomorphisms of a primitive people but the best, though not the only, means of solving the difficult problem of translating into human language something of the incommunicable realities of God's wisdom and holiness.

The jealous anger of pagan gods and goddesses is a disturbingly frequent theme of ancient mythologies. Passionate reprisals fall from the heavens with lightninglike destructiveness when these volatile and vindictive beings are aroused, or their loves are thwarted or their possessions jeopardized. More disturbing is the appearance of such passion in Old Testament allusions to Yahweh. More surprising still is the clearly stated fact that in Yahweh love and jealousy are linked. Men who offered Him a love divided would long rue their folly, but a single love would receive a lavish reward:

You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or worship them. For I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their fathers' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation, on the children of those who love me and keep my commandments.

(Ex 20:4-6)

In a narrative rich in covenant traditions, Joshua reminded his contemporaries of Yahweh's goodness in times past and times more recent, of His goodness to their fathers of old and to their immediate

33. See Philippe de la Trinité, *op. cit.*, p. 124; cf. *Summa Theol.* II-II, qq. 34, 20, 19, 37.

forebears. And in it he warned them of the nature of the Lord to whom they wished to pledge their service.³⁴ "You may not be able," he cautioned, "to serve the Lord, for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God who will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If, after the good He has done for you, you forsake the Lord and serve strange gods, He will do evil to you and destroy you" (24:19-20).

Joshua's fears were well founded. Prophets of the exile like Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah watched the divine jealousy become the divine wrath, saw man's sin call down upon itself the just decrees of Him who is omnipotent Love.³⁵

Therefore, as I live, says the Lord God, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable abominations, I swear to cut you down. I will not look upon you with pity nor have mercy. . . . Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will wreak my fury upon them till I am appeased; they shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken in my jealousy when I spend my fury upon them.

(Ez 5:11, 13)

What is this divine wrath that is so righteously unleashed, so richly deserved, so opposed to the tolerant indifferentism of today? In biblical terms it is the manifestation of an all-holy God; it is the rejection of all that is soiling or impure; it is the punishment for sin. If we find expressions of divine anger hard to understand, so did the Jews.³⁶ Invariably they looked on all public calamities as signs of divine displeasure. When fire burnt the outermost part of the camp, they ignored all secondary causes and attributed the disaster to the anger of the Lord (see Num 11:1-3). When invaders plundered the land, outwitted the slow-moving tribes, foiled their best stratagems, they ascribed their many defeats to the Lord's displeasure with His own (see Jg 2:14-15). Conversely, good fortune and welcome success seemed the harbingers of His contentment, prosperity the proof that His anger had waned.

Puzzled, the author of the book of Job seems to plumb the depths of

34. See George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, XVII (September 1954), 50-76. This analysis of Hittite suzerainty treaties throws great light on the covenant concept of Israel and is indispensable for an understanding of Jos 24. (See also Neal M. Flanagan, "The Covenant and How It Grew," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, CXLIII, September 1960, 145-156.)

35. See Ez 36:5; 38:19; Is 42:13; also Ps 36:1; Prov 23:17.

36. See Philippe de la Trinité, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

this mystery. He states his case plainly: The Lord is responsible, let Him explain and justify His ways with the world:

*It is all one! therefore I say:
Both the innocent and the wicked He destroys.
When the scourge slays suddenly,
He laughs at the despair of the innocent.
The earth is given into the hands of the wicked;
He covers the faces of its judges.
If it is not He, who then is it?*

(9:22-24)

From the midst of a whirlwind Job learned his lesson. Unhesitatingly, the Lord began His queries: Where was Job when the earth was measured, when the morning stars sang together, when the sea was set behind its bars, when the dawn flung away the darkness, when man's exits and entrances were planned, when snow and hail were stored in the sky, when stars were flung jewel-like against the heavens, when birds and beasts and fish were given their domain? All this and much more was required of the man who had "clouded the truth with words ill-considered" (see 38:2) and who acknowledged that he was unable to explain all the mystery of the visible world. It is not to be wondered, then, that the mystery of the invisible world was beyond his understanding.

Were God man's equal, He might be understood; were He an "extra," a mere addition to our existence, He might be ignored. Since He is the Wholly-other, the All-powerful, the All-wise, the Sublime, the Ever-present, the Always-acting, the Eternally-immutable, the Omniscient and the Good, He must be served. In this brief day, man can do no better than honor Him who is near yet totally unique, praise Him without whose power he would not be, exalt Him whose wisdom gives meaning to all things, revere Him who is above all creatures, near all creatures, protecting all creatures, unchangingly concerned about those to whom He gives all manner of unrecognized good.

Had they encountered the God of Israel, Tze-kung would have discovered in Him far more than was hidden in his cherished *shu*; Tseng Tze would have seen that Yahweh's wisdom was greater than *shu* plus *chung*; Yajnavalkya, Buddha, all the sages of East and West would have found in the two Testaments the love for which they

searched, which alone could satisfy their deepest needs and fulfill their most hidden desires.³⁷ So mighty is the love of Yahweh, so wise, so inscrutable that the sorrows of man, even his wickedness and mistakes, not to speak of his virtues and joy, have eternal meaning in the mystery of this love.

37. The unique moral contribution of ancient Israel is examined by John Ferguson in *Moral Values in the Ancient World* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1959). In his conclusion he declares that "'*ahabab*, the election-love which represents the very nature of God, when applied to man, slides over into *hesed*, the loyal fulfillment of covenanted obligations, and *hesed*, when it requires definition, is seen in terms of *zedek* which, while remaining theocentric, expresses, I think, at first at least, God's will rather than His nature" (*ibid.* p. 226).

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ISRAEL IN THE PARABLES

"ON THAT day . . . all the crowd stood on the shore. And He spoke to them many things in parables" (Mt 13:1-3). The three synoptic Gospels agree that there was a day, about the middle of the first year of His ministry, when Jesus told a number of parables to the people gathered by the Sea of Galilee. Though He had used parables before, this day marked a change in His way of teaching, a change so impressive to the disciples that St. Matthew felt he could not do justice to it, save by rhetorical exaggeration: "All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and without parables He did not speak to them" (13:34; cf. Mk 4:33-34). As he was wont to do, the Evangelist saw in this an Old Testament prophecy come true; here was fulfilled "what was spoken through the prophet," who said:

*I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since
the foundation of the world.*
(Mt 13:35; Ps 77:2)

To search for "things hidden" will be the purpose of this essay. Out of the many gospel parables, I shall select those that in one way or another are related to Israel's place in the economy of salvation. I shall confine myself to this one mighty theme, thus leaving aside other important problems, for instance, the role of the parables in the catechesis of the infant Church. And it may be well to say in advance that I look upon Israel as the paradigm of mankind, upon her misstep as the pattern of human failing, upon Scribes and Pharisees as types of those hostile to Jesus in every age and place. Only a perspective so wide can give the parables their full import; only a perspective so universal can free His authentic message to Israel from interpretations that have darkened or overdrawn it.

PARABLE AND MASHAL

WHAT is a parable? A comparison that, as the Greek origin of the word indicates, sets two separate but similar objects or events side by side so that the familiar one may throw light upon the unfamiliar one. Its context and introductory sentence leave no doubt of the narrator's intention to lead his hearers from the seen to the unseen. To the orator of antiquity, Seneca recommends parables "as props to our feebleness, to bring both speaker and listener face to face with the subject under discussion."¹ For Quintilian similitudes reinforce our proofs and lend image to truth.²

Interesting though the use of parables in the rhetoric of ancient Rome may be, the relationship of the gospel parable to the Old Testament *mashal* is of far greater importance. A broad literary term, *mashal* is applied to a variety of sayings. No doubt its original form was the popular maxim that, in the brevity of a single sentence, expressed the wisdom of daily life; for instance, when Ezekiel says: "Like mother, like daughter" (16:44). Pithy sayings such as this, coined by the people, later developed into the art form of proverbs in which the comparison is at times fully made, at others only intimated:

*Like golden apples in silver settings
are words spoken at the proper time.
(Prov 25:11)*

*The crucible for silver, and the furnace for gold,
but the tester of hearts is the Lord.
(Prov 17:3)*

Any biblical passage, short or long, may be called a *mashal*, if its character is enigmatic, if its sense is hidden and disclosed to none but the penetrating mind. Thus the oracles of Balaam, giving a glimpse of the future (see Num 23:7), as well as the speeches of Job, being the utterance of a wise man (see 27:1; 29:1), are described as *meshalim*. Even the singer of Psalm 77, St. Matthew's witness that Jesus' way of teaching is in harmony with that of the Old Testament (see 13:35),

1. Ep. 59:6; cf. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, trans. Richard M. Gummere ("Loeb Classical Library"; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), I, 413.

2. See Bk. 8:3:72; cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. Harold E. Butler ("Loeb Classical Library"; New York: Putnam, 1921), III, 251.

thinks of his song as a parable, for he sings of Israel's history, not simply to recall the events of the past, but to warn his hearers against imitating the rebelliousness of their fathers in the desert.

As the concise saying became part of sapiential literature, so the longer parabolic narrative became part of prophetic speech. Yet to the interpreters of God's will, literary classification mattered little: Nathan's tale of the poor man's lamb (see 2 Kg 12:1-4), Isaiah's song of the vineyard (see chap. 5), Ezekiel's allegory of the eagles and the vine (see chap. 17), these and other stories like them were, to the Hebrew mind, *meshalim*. What marks the Old Testament parable is the fact that it is not an explicit comparison but a story intelligible in itself; its real meaning, however, remains unknown to the hearer until the narrator reveals it. "You are the man!" (2 Kg 12:7) the prophet cries out, as David, angered by the greed of the rich man in Nathan's parable, demands the death of the sinner. Again, Isaiah ends his song of unanswered love with: "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel" (5:7).

By speaking to His people in parables, Jesus consciously placed Himself in the company of those who, prior to His coming, had expressed the divine message in a language drawn from the world of human experience and corresponding to the nature of man, to whom knowledge comes by way of his senses. Even man's most spiritual knowledge is a flower that thrusts its roots in the visible and audible world. Hence Jesus chose an ancient method of teaching which, though cherished most by simple folk, was also savored by the learned. In thus adapting Himself to the mentality of His own people, He adapted Himself at the same time to the mentality of every man, every nation, every age.³

3. The universal appeal of Jesus' parables is stressed by Claude Tresmontant: "The biblical parable could be understood by the Galilean peasant and no less by the Corinthian dock laborer of St. Paul's time; it is equally plain to the factory worker of the Paris of today." (*Essai sur la pensée hébraïque*, Paris: Cerf, 1953, p. 65; cf. *A Study of Hebrew Thought*, trans. Michael Francis Gibson, New York: Desclée, 1960, p. 60.)

That parables are not meant to convey esoteric knowledge but to prod the listener into action is well brought out by Charles H. Dodd. He writes: "[The parables] are the natural expression of a mind that sees truth in concrete pictures rather than conceives it in abstractions. . . . This concrete, pictorial mode of expression is thoroughly characteristic of the sayings of Jesus. Thus instead of saying: 'Beneficence should not be ostentatious,' He says: 'When you give alms, do not blow your trumpet'; instead of saying: 'Wealth is a grave hindrance to true religion,' He says: 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to

PARABLES OF JUDGMENT

I SHOULD like to give a first glimpse of what the parables say about Israel, and what they do not say, by discussing a few of those often called "parables of judgment." Through them Jesus exhorts, admonishes, urges, because He loves; He speaks to the leaders of Israel but also to the whole people in order to bring them to an inner turning and to the full obedience of faith.

THE GRUMBLING CHILDREN

It is early in His ministry that Jesus turns to a crowd gathered around Him to praise the Baptist wasting in prison as a man unbent, invincible, truly a prophet, the greatest messenger of all who preceded Him (see Lk 7:24-28). The people standing before Him are common folk, sinners; they are men and women who at the time of John's preaching submitted to his baptism of repentance while the learned, the Pharisees among them, remained aloof, thereby defeating the plan God had for them (see 7:30). Saddened by these thwarters of God's design, Jesus says:

To what then shall I liken the men of this generation? And what are they like? * They are like children sitting in the market place, calling to one another and saying:

*"We have piped to you, and you have not danced;
we have sung dirges, and you have not wept."*

(Lk 7:31-32)

Everywhere children choose their leaders, repeat their words, imitate their gestures, whether their play is a joyous wedding or a sad burial. The children in our parable, however, are different. Instead of gladly

enter the Kingdom of God.' In such figurative expressions the germ of the parable is already present. At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought." (*Parables of the Kingdom*, London: Nisbet, 1935, pp. 15-16.)

4. This is a typical parabolic beginning, akin to the formulas the ancient rabbis used to introduce their own parables: "A parable; it is like," and "Wherewith is it to be compared?" These introductions show, among other things, the "common background in external form" of the parables of Jesus and those of the rabbis. (William O. E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables in the Light of Their Jewish Background*, New York: Macmillan, 1936, p. 11.)

accepting the proposals of their leaders, they refuse to participate in dance or procession; instead of playing, they sit in the market place, sullen, peevish; instead of joining in a happy song with one another, they exchange bitter words, words of irritation and reproach. Here the parable breaks up.

In the choice of a theme so commonplace as to be almost trite, Jesus discloses His truly Hebrew way of thinking. Unlike the Greek thinker, who in order to demonstrate his propositions reaches for a realm of ideas that is outside matter, the Hebrew man sees the things of heaven incarnate in the here and now of daily life.

To represent a metaphysical or theological reality, the Platonic symbol has recourse to myth, to unreality. It is disembodied. . . . The Hebrew, on the contrary, in order to indicate and teach the mysteries that are the proper food of the spirit . . . uses everyday events, things common to all, history. Never does Jesus employ myths, [Platonic] allegories or legends; what *is* is meaningful enough to make known the mysteries of salvation He has come to reveal.⁵

Traditionally, the parable has been related to the verses that follow it: "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say: 'He has a devil.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say: 'Behold a man who is a glutton, and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners!'" (Lk 7:33-34). St. Augustine, for instance, has this comment:

The words "we have sung dirges, and you have not wept," refer to John who, by abstaining from food and drink, stands for the grief of repentance. The words "we have played the flute for you" refer to the Lord Himself who, in taking food and drink like other men, represents the joy of God's kingdom. But [the Jews] wanted neither to humble themselves with John nor to rejoice with Christ.⁶

At first sight, this interpretation seems beyond question but it oversteps the limits of St. Luke's text, which stresses that the children in the market place are "calling to one another." There are two groups of children to be sure, one wishing to play wedding, the other funeral, but the point is that they are all alike in their quarrelsome refusal

5. Tresmontant, *Essai*, pp. 64-65; cf. *Study*, pp. 59-60.

6. *Quaest. Evang. II* (PL 35:1337). St. Augustine's wording agrees with the Vulgate whereas the Greek text has "we have piped to you."

of every suggestion. Neither John nor Jesus is represented by these surly little urchins: They voice the refusals of Jesus' generation and, alas, of our own.

In order to understand a pure parable,⁷ and thus the mind of him who tells it, one must follow the principle formulated by Maldonatus:

The meaning of a parable must be drawn from the whole of the narrative; if it is dissected, it loses its vigor and its bearing. . . . Hence one must compare not the individual features of parabolic characters with those of actual persons, not accident with accident but substance with substance; one must compare not partial aspects of the story with partial aspects of the facts the story is to throw light on, not segment with segment but the whole with the whole.⁸

This principle forbids us to compare one group of children with the Baptist, the other with the Christ; it also blocks the inquiry, so favored by patristic exegesis, into the significance of the playing of the flute and the singing of dirges, of dancing and weeping. The eye of the exegete must pierce the variety of embellishing features in order to find the essence of the parable, which is none other than the ill-humor of the children in the market place. Just as no invitation can please them, none can satisfy the Scribes and Pharisees. Just as the children snub every offer of their companions, many of the Scribes and Pharisees reject the austerity of John as well as the moderation of Jesus and use every subterfuge to evade the surrender of their innermost hearts.

Clearly, this story of stubborn children is an admonition to the men responsible for the welfare of their people not to bar themselves and others from the messianic favors at hand. Its cry of warning is brought out most forcibly by two modern exegetes, Dodd and Jeremias:

7. Pure parables are few (the grumbling children, the unclean spirit, the two debtors), and so are pure allegories (the good shepherd, the vine and the branches). The majority of parables are mixed forms in which now this, now that, element prevails. They are either parables with allegoric features or allegories with parabolic features.

8. I am presenting the principle of Maldonatus as quoted by Denis Buzy, S.C.J., in *Les paraboles* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1948, pp. 105-106). He refers to an early edition of the *Commentarium in Matthaeum* by Joannes Maldonatus, S.J. (Mussiponti, 1596, p. 238) which I have not been able to locate. In part the Latin reads: *Totum sententiae corpus intueundum est, et integrum ex integra parabola trahendum, ne in partes divisum pereat atque dissolvatur. . . . Non personas personis, sed negotium negotio; nec partes partibus, sed totum toti comparari [oportet].*

The picture of petulant children who quarrel about their games suggests the frivolous captiousness of a generation who would not see that the movement inaugurated by John and brought to such an unexpected pitch by Jesus was a crisis of the first magnitude, but wasted their time in foolish carping at the asceticism of the one, and the good-companionship of the other. They fiddled while Rome was burning.⁹

"You," says Jesus, "are exactly like the grumbling children. Nothing will please you, God sends you his messengers, the last messengers, to the last generation before the catastrophe. But to you the Baptist is a madman, and I am a reveller. You hate the preaching of repentance, and you hate the proclamation of the gospel. So you play your childish game with God's messengers while Rome burns!"¹⁰

Subdued though it is, Jesus' lament over His generation echoes Jeremiah's anguish at the indocility of his contemporaries, only now those who cannot be taught or moved are the learned of the land:

*My breast! my breast! how I suffer!
 The walls of my heart!
 My heart beats wildly,
 I cannot be still;
 For I have heard the sound of the trumpet,
 the alarm of war. . . .
 Fools my people are,
 they know me not;
 Senseless children they are,
 having no understanding;
 They are wise in evil,
 but know not how to do good.*

(4:19, 22)

But all is not darkness for there is this happy prospect: "Wisdom is justified by all her children" (Lk 7:35).¹¹ Even though many Scribes and Pharisees keep aloof, there are the children of wisdom who will hear wisdom's word and accept her invitation.

9. Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

10. Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: Scribner's, 1955), p. 121.

11. "To justify God's doings," "to acknowledge as right His judgment and decrees," are expressions found in rabbinical literature. For several examples, see Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: Beck, 1922), I, 604.

THE BARREN FIG TREE

Another call to repentance is sounded in the parable of the tree that has lost its vigor:

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said to the vinedresser: "Behold, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore; why does it still encumber the ground?" But he answered him and said: "Sir, let it alone this year too, till I dig around it and manure it. Perhaps it may bear fruit; but if not, then afterwards thou shalt cut it down."

(Lk 13:6-9)

Neither the owner's charge nor the gardener's prayer are difficult to understand: While the one thinks of his profit, the other remembers his worries and joys at the time the seedling grew and is thus ready to go to any length to save the tree he loves.¹² Again the story remains unfinished.

Whatever their persuasions, exegetes admire this parable because of its charm, its freshness, and its fidelity to nature. Yet one must not exaggerate this fidelity: The parable is true to nature only in so far as is consistent with its didactic purpose. As a matter of fact, even in those days wood was scarce in Palestine, and a gardener would hardly have granted a barren fig tree so long a reprieve. But the parable's intention demands a singular gesture. That the story contains an offer of mercy becomes clear when the preceding lines are kept in mind: "Now there came at that very time [on Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem, a few weeks before His passion] some who brought Him word about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" (Lk 13:1). This bewildering report and the memory of a similar incident give Jesus the opportunity to warn not only the Scribes, but all those around Him: "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloe fell and killed them; do you think that they were more guilty than all the other dwellers in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent, you will all perish in the same manner" (Lk 13:4-5). The terror of judgment is upon them! It is the eleventh hour, only a change of heart can avert the national catastrophe that is near.

12. For a Palestinian gardener the use of manure was almost unknown and thus was an extraordinary measure.

We cannot interpret the parable of the barren fig tree in exactly the same way as we did that of the children in the market place. With the latter, the point of comparison is exclusively the contrariness of the children. All other features are unessential and can be altered without impairing the sense of the parable; suggestions of different games, for instance, would leave the core of the story untouched. The former, however, demands another approach for it is not a pure parable but an allegory with parabolic overtones. The fig tree, which the Greek original places emphatically at the beginning of the story, cannot be replaced without damage to meaning. In reading the parable, one also senses the importance of its persons, the owner of the vineyard and its keeper; there is in fact a certain solemnity about them. Almost unnoticeably, the little tale assumes some of the aspects of metaphor and allegory, in which one thing is not set by the side of another—this is the way of similitudes—but in which one thing is substituted for another.¹³

When interpreting the parable of the tree whose ebbing vitality has made it a burden to its owner, one must guard against two extremes: an inordinate fondness for allegory and, no less, a fear of it. One must be wary of the tendency of the Fathers to see significance in every single stroke of the image drawn: the vineyard, the digging, the manure, the three years of barrenness.¹⁴ But one must no less avoid the phobia of some critics who flee from even the thought of allegory in the parables as Jesus told them. Only when its significant metaphors—the fig tree, the owner of the vineyard, the vinedressers—are dis-

13. Simile and metaphor differ in this: In a simile one thing is likened to another, for instance: "Be wise *as* serpents, and guileless *as* doves" (Mt 10:16) or "They were bewildered and dejected, *like* sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 9:36). In a metaphor one thing becomes another, for instance: "We *are* the people he shepherds, the flock he guides" (Ps 94:7) or "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts *is* the house of Israel" (Is 5:7). In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle declares that the difference between simile and metaphor is but slight. When the poet says of Achilles that he sprang on his foe like a lion, this is a simile. But when he says of him: "The lion sprang," this is a metaphor. (*Rhetorica*, iii. 4. 1406a. 20-22.) Now, an allegory is a series of metaphors which, in order to be understood properly, must be interpreted point by point. Yet, easy as it is to define these figures of speech, it is difficult to keep them distinct while using them. A speaker may move from one form to another, as the situation requires, and not be aware of it.

14. Attempts, for instance, to see in the three years of barrenness a reference to the three ages of the world, the three phases of Israel's history, or the three years of Jesus' public ministry are completely arbitrary. Such easy identifications between parabolic features and historic events frequently destroy the simplicity of the story.

tinguished from its incidental features, does the parable stand out in bold relief. The fig tree, a sign of fruitfulness, prosperity, and peace, is a figure of Israel, on whom God has lavished all these favors.¹⁵ The owner of the vineyard is Yahweh, the Lord and King of Israel who, for so long but vainly, has been awaiting the fruits of her faith, her devotion, and her worship, in whose name Isaiah laments:

*What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I had not done?*

*Why, when I looked for the crop of grapes,
did it bring forth wild grapes?*

(5:4)

But who is the vinedresser pleading that the death sentence be stayed if not Jesus who is come to save what is lost?

Turning story into statement, this then seems to be the parable's meaning: As the vinedresser, by his pleading and offer of special care, wins a respite of one year for a fig tree destined to be cut down, so Jesus, by His words and wonders, wins for His people a brief delay of the threatening judgment. During that time their spirit must be renewed if they do not wish to perish. We know that most of Jesus' contemporaries did not use the period of grace granted them and that the threatened catastrophe, in all its horror, overtook the city of Jerusalem and its people. Still, it would be wrong to read this and other parables of judgment as evidence of Israel's final rejection.¹⁶ For the parable's last sentence is not altogether without promise. "Perhaps [the fig tree] may bear fruit; but if not, then afterwards thou shalt cut it down" sounds as if the vinedresser would not fell the tree without a new command. Even though the tree may deserve to be abandoned, he begs: "Sir, let it alone this year too."

Israel's was a unique hour in history, yet every historic hour mirrors the opportunities and dangers of that one exceptional hour. As then,

15. It is the prophets who like to speak of the fig tree as a symbol of the chosen people (see Os 9:10; Mic 7:1; Jer 8:13; 24). That the fig tree indicates well-being is shown by the often repeated phrase "to sit under one's vine and fig tree," a phrase that expresses Israel's ideal of tranquillity (see 3 Kg 4:25; Mic 4:4; 1 Mac 14:12; Zach 3:9-10).

16. Augustin George remarks that even the verdicts of Jesus in the letters to the seven churches (see Apoc 2-3), in spite of their tone of finality, are still conditional. As long as this world lasts or as long as a man lives, neither promise nor threat is absolute; both can be turned into their opposite. (See "Un appel à la fidélité," *Bible et vie chrétienne*, XV, September-November 1956, 84.)

so now, grace is accepted and grace is wasted, and it would seem more often wasted than accepted. God's anger ought to strike, but the prayer for still another year of grace is repeated again and again in the sacrifice of the Son of Man. Once come, once having shed His blood, He never ceases to intercede on behalf of Israel and of the whole world so that judgment may be postponed.¹⁷

THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT

The parable of the man possessed by an unclean spirit, too, warns of the judgment that is soon to strike. Without comparing its two versions and without going into the question of its original setting, I shall simply follow the wording of St. Matthew. According to him, Jesus told it in Galilee, sometime after He had received the deputation sent by the imprisoned Baptist and shortly after He had exorcised a man possessed, blind, and dumb. The situation is even graver than it was when He spoke of the grumbling children. Now some of the Pharisees face the young Rabbi with open hostility. In order to degrade Him in the eyes of the people they do not shrink from the most incredible accusation: "This man does not cast out devils except by Beelzebub, the prince of devils" (Mt 12:24). Jesus rejects the slander by saying that a kingdom at war with itself must needs perish. In the parable of the "strong man" that follows, He reveals Himself as the never-to-be-vanquished victor over Satan. Conscious of His messianic dignity, He demands an unmistakable stand for or against Himself; still, He declares that sins against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but not sins against the Spirit. Having refused the Pharisees any sign save that of Jonas, He finally tells the multitude, wavering and undecided, this parable:

But when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he roams through dry places in search of a resting place, and finds none. Then he says: "I will return to my house which I left"; and when he has come, he finds the place unoccupied, swept and adorned. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be with this evil generation also.

(Mt 12:43-45)

17. See Josef Dillersberger, *Lukas* (Salzburg: Müller, 1941), IV, 170.

With this story, the whole scene of the exorcism of the mute man comes alive again (see Mt 12:22-24). For the people's sake Jesus borrows the material for His parable from the popular beliefs of His day, without intending, however, to instruct His listeners about demoniacs and their affliction or demons, their nature and doings. The evil spirit is described as a bandit; braggart that he is, he tries to convince himself that he left the man he possessed because he wanted to, not because he was forced out: "I will return to my house which I left" (Mt 12:44). His restlessness; his stay in the desert, from time immemorial feared as the abode of the devil;¹⁸ his reconnoiter of the old lodging, now more desirable than ever; his miserable weakness, compelling him to seek alliance with seven strong companions; the bold stroke that helps him regain his former dwelling—all this is vividly described in a few brief sentences.

For the correct interpretation of the story one must determine its literary structure. Is it a pure parable, an allegory, or a mixture of both? None of its features comes near the fig tree in gravity or fullness of meaning, none is an obvious scriptural symbol. Thus an allegorization of the parable cannot but end in absurdity. This is the conclusion of Tillmann, among others:

To see in the arid wilderness the world of pagans; in the cleaning and adorning [of the house] the operation of virtues and supernatural gifts or, indeed, that of vices, which are supposed to be the jewels proper to an unclean spirit; in the seven demons the seven deadly sins, is a useless undertaking. These individual features cannot support such a strain: To give meaning to them can only lead to inconsistencies for which the parable itself offers no excuse.¹⁹

The only way of avoiding such inconsistencies is the thorough application of Maldonatus's basic rule: not to compare accident with accident, but substance with substance; not segment with segment, but the whole with the whole. What, then, is this parable's substance, what the whole? Without doubt, it is the final state of the possessed man, a state not merely identical with that before he gained freedom from his tormentor but one more disquieting, more dangerous, almost

18. See Deut 8:15; Is 34:9-15; Tob 8:3; Apoc 18:2; Mt 4:1.

19. Fritz Tillmann, *Die sonntäglichen Evangelien* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1921), p. 337.

hopeless. It is a state like this that threatens the contemporaries of Jesus if, after having been roused from their spiritual slumber, first by the Baptist and now by Him, they give ear to the malicious talk of those Pharisees who say that He is in league with the devil. If they let themselves be estranged from Him, they will not simply return to their former indifference but slide into something far worse. All this, one must not forget, Jesus says to the men of His day, "this evil generation" (Mt 12:45) as Tillmann notes:

Jesus does not intend the parable to be an abstract of the history of His people, nor does He imply that though they were once delivered from the devil by Moses and his law, they have now, after their rejection of the Messiah, irrevocably fallen into the hands of the archenemy of God.²⁰

Yet many exegetes of the past, disregarding the primary rule of interpretation, have seen in the parable of the devil's triumph a summary of Israel's entire history. Thus St. John Chrysostom is able to write:

This is what [Jesus] said [to the Jews]: "As a man, once possessed, then freed from his affliction, should he become negligent, brings upon himself a derangement even more grievous, so did you. You, too, victims of great folly, were once in the grip of the devil when you worshipped idols and sacrificed your sons to demons. Still I did not abandon you but cast out that devil by the prophets. Now I myself have come to cleanse you. But you do not heed, rather thrust yourselves into greater wickedness." (For it is a greater and more grievous crime to slay the Lord Himself than prophets.) "Thus you will suffer things more grievous than those you bore in the past, I mean those you bore in Babylon, in Egypt, and under Antiochus." Indeed, harsher than those were the sufferings that befell them under Vespasian and Titus. Hence He said: "There will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor will be" (Mt 24:21).

The tribulations to come are not all that Jesus wishes them to understand; He wishes them to know they will be utterly destitute of all virtue and more vulnerable to the power of the devil than in previous periods of their history. Though they did sin then, there were upright men among them and the providence of God was with them and the grace of the Spirit, tending them, correcting them, ever offering them His aid. But from now on, [Jesus] says, they will be fully deprived of this guardianship, so much so that virtue will be rare, evil strong, and the tyranny of

devils abundant. . . . In their evil doings [the Jews today] surpass their ancestors by far; sorcery and magic they practice, wantonness they display, and all of it beyond measure. Though at the moment they are held in check, they have often rebelled and risen against the emperors so that they have sunk to the bottom of evil.²¹

Here St. John Chrysostom speaks, not Jesus; for though the great Church father makes the parable on the return of the evil spirit his theme, his bitter denunciations of the Jews are completely out of tune with the parable's intention. The same must be said of another commentary on St. Matthew, wrongly attributed to St. John Chrysostom. Its unknown author goes to an even greater extreme when he applies to the whole Jewish people the term "synagogue of Satan" (Apoc 2:9), a term that in its original context clearly referred only to the Jews of Smyrna; as persecutors of the Church there, they did not deserve to be honored by the name "Jews."

The last state of this people has become worse than the first, for previously, though they were not [true] worshippers of God, they were not deicides and though they sinned against Him, they were still called God's people. But now, as St. John testifies, they have become the synagogue of Satan.²²

The tradition that mistakes the parable of the devil's success for a synopsis of Jewish history is well summed up by the seventeenth-century exegete, Cornelius a Lapide, when he has Jesus address His people:

[The wicked companions of the evil spirit] make you blaspheme me, my doctrine, my miracles, and say that by Beelzebub I cast out devils; they make you pursue me incessantly unto death and crucify me, which of all crimes is the greatest and the worst. Therefore God will punish you through Titus with utter destruction and cause you to be without God, without Messiah, without law, without temple, without sacrifice, without kingdom, without faith, that you will obstinately hold your own unbelief and blindness to be the true faith and the true light.²³

There is in this passage none of the restraint an exegete must exercise if he wishes to be an interpreter and not an inventor. Lest he

21. *In Mt. Hom.*, XLIII (PG 57:460-461).

22. *In Mt. Hom.*, XXXI (PG 56:790-791).

23. Cornelii a Lapide, S.J., *Comm. in Script. Sacr.* (Paris: Vivès, 1889), XV, 314.

become a victim of his own bias, he must stay within the confines of a given parable. If one called to preach the gospel widens the parable's application as he ought—for the here and now of Jesus' day is the pattern of the here and now of every day—he must apply it not merely to all the generations of Jews but to all the generations of men. Far from condemning His people to the lasting servitude of the devil, Jesus warns the multitude near Him not to forget what they have seen, not to forget what they have heard. A man, a generation, freed from sloth is like a house from which the spirit hostile to God has been expelled, He tells them. "A new master must reign there, the word of Jesus must be its rule of life, and the joy of the Kingdom of God must pervade it. It must become a *katoikētērion tou theou en pneumati*, a dwelling place for God in the spirit (Eph 2:22)." ²⁴

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

THE closer we move toward the tragic end of the conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel, the sterner the parables become. With the stories of the two sons, the vinedressers, and the wedding feast, the theme of judgment reaches its climax, while another is introduced, that of God's reign. In these parables, Jesus cuts through a maze of illusions, separating spirit from spirit: those who will from those who will not share in His kingdom.

THE TWO SONS

At His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, throngs greet Jesus as the Son of David, the Messiah. He cleanses the Temple, drives out the money-changers, heals the blind and the lame, while the children praise Him. The next day He returns to the Temple to teach there. Contemptuous of His compassion and angered by His power, the chief priests and elders question Him. When they ask by what authority He does what He does, He answers with a question of His own: "Whence was the baptism of John? From heaven or from men?" (Mt 21:25). Their reply is a fearful, evasive "We do not know" (Mt 21:27). The coming of John, whose message they ignored, was another sign of God's favor. Fugitives, then, from grace, Israel's

24. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

teachers show themselves unfit for their high office, and Jesus proceeds to confirm this unfitness:

"A man had two sons; and he came to the first and said: 'Son, go and work today in my vineyard.' But he answered and said: 'I will not'; but afterwards he regretted it and went. And he came to the other and spoke in the same manner. And this one answered: 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?" They said: "The first." Jesus said to them: "Amen I say to you, the publicans and harlots are entering the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him; whereas you, seeing it, did not even repent afterwards, that you might believe him."

(Mt 21:28-32)

Most of the Fathers take the two sons as figures of the Jews and the Gentiles, whereas many modern exegetes see in them the esteemed and the despised within Israel. The latter view seems to be more in keeping with the compassion, indeed, the respect with which Jesus, after finishing the parable, speaks of publicans and harlots. Hence the son who promised to work in the vineyard but did not carry out his pledge depicts Jewish officialdom. Though Israel's leaders pretend to say Yes to the will of God, they are, at this critical moment, found wanting. Called to pave the way for God's reign—the reign announced by the Baptist and made present in the person and message of Jesus²⁵—they are no longer standing aside like the sulky children in the market place, they are in these very days preparing their final No to the messianic King. The other son, ill-mannered but soon regretful of his impetuous "I will not," is the image of publicans and harlots. Outcasts from society, outcasts it would seem even from God, they repent their initial disobedience, give ear to the message of the Baptist and of Jesus, and as changed men and women welcome God's reign.

No privileged station, Jesus proclaims, no merely external worship, no saying "Lord, Lord," but only total commitment helps a man enter the kingdom of heaven (see Mt 7:21). The parable spells out once

25. This identification of the person of Jesus with the rule of God is implied in many New Testament passages, for instance, in Mk 10:29, Mt 19:29, and Lk 18:29. Thus Tertullian could write: "In the Gospel Christ Himself is the reign of God." (*Adv. Marcion*. IV, 33, PL 2:471.)

more the prophetic grievance against a life that contradicts faith, a grievance never ceasing from Samuel to Malachi:

*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice
And to hearken than the fat of rams.*
(1 Kg 15:22)

Yet, for all its sternness, the parable of the two dissimilar sons does not lack solace: The publicans and harlots will enter the kingdom of God before the "just," but even to the "just" the doors may open. Though they have broken their promise to God, they may fulfill it in days to come.

THE VINEDRESSERS

The tale of the vinedressers gives a still deeper insight into our topic: Israel's mysterious destiny as seen in the parables. So much was Christian catechesis aware of this parable's importance for the history of salvation that, except for the parable of the sower, it is the only one recorded by all three Synoptics. I shall give its simplest version, that of St. Mark, though occasionally supplemented by expressions from the other evangelists.

A man (a householder) planted a vineyard, and put a hedge about it, and dug a wine vat, and built a tower; then he let it out to vinedressers, and went abroad (for a long time). And at the proper time (when the fruit season drew near) he sent a servant to the vinedressers to receive from the vinedressers some of the fruit of the vineyard; but they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent another servant to them; but this one they wounded in the head and treated shamefully. And again he sent another, and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.²⁶ Now he still had one left, a beloved son; and him he sent to them last of all, saying: "They will respect my son."

But the vinedressers said to one another: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." So they seized him and

26. The freedom with which the individual Synoptics tell the story of the vinedressers shows that the evangelists, though faithful witnesses, were not tape recorders. St. Luke is particularly effective in his climactic presentation of the servants' mistreatment. The first is beaten and sent away empty-handed, the second beaten and treated shamefully, the third wounded and cast out; only the son is murdered.

killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.²⁷ What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and will give the vineyard to others (who will render to him the fruits in their seasons).

(Mk 12:1-9)

The very first words of the parable take us into an allegorical atmosphere. The vineyard, in the Greek original of St. Mark's Gospel deliberately placed at the beginning of the story, is Israel: not so much the physical Israel often unwilling to serve but rather the Israel of God's design, called to do His will and to submit fully to His reign. Hedge, tower, and vat, to each of which many of the Fathers give a distinct meaning,²⁸ are nothing more than parabolic features, describing God's minute providence for His people. The vinedressers, who in the absence of the owner are put in charge of the vineyard, are Israel's rulers. Goal and duration of his journey are undisclosed, since the journey is mentioned for no other purpose than to heighten the parable's dramatic effect. The servants are the prophets of the Old Covenant down to John the Baptist.²⁹ What Scripture tells of the fate of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and the other servants of God sent to shake the conscience of Israel, fully corresponds to the situation the parable portrays, futile though it would be to attempt matching the various messengers and their mistreatment with specific prophets. Rather are the servants' sufferings described so graphically that Jesus' hearers may envisage the horror of His last warning to Scribes and Pharisees: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou who killest the prophets,

27. Buzy considers this wording the authentic one but finds in the Lucan version: "They cast him out of the vineyard and killed him (20:15; cf. Mt 21:39) a "conscious allusion to the historic event of the Passion [that] seems to be influenced by Heb 13:12: 'And so Jesus also . . . suffered outside the gate.'" (*Op. cit.*, p. 414.)

28. The hedge is seen as the Law or God's solicitude for His people, and the tower as the lofty revelation of the Old Testament that enabled Israel's priests to look ahead to Christ's coming. Again, the vat is said to be the prophets from whose lips the message of the Holy Spirit is poured like a sparkling wine over the people, or the Church in which all good works are changed into the wine of sacrifice and serve God's glory. (See *Comm. in Evang. Mt.*, PG 56:853-854.)

29. Jeremiah frequently calls the prophets servants. Like a refrain, there appears in his oracles the lament: "From the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day, I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets. Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid heed; they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their fathers" (7:25-26; see also 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 44:4).

and stonest those who are sent to thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not!" (Mt 23:37).

The repeated ejections of the servants build up to a climactic peak, the coming of the son and the murderous scheme of the vine-dressers. There, at the peak, we are shown two mysteries: the incomprehensible mystery of divine love which values the fruits of the vineyard, that is, Israel's grateful response, above the life of the one beloved Son; and the equally incomprehensible mystery of human resistance to the promptings of grace. I say *human* resistance, though the vinedressers who plotted the son's death that the inheritance might be theirs (see Mk 12:7) were Jews. Their craving for the inheritance was a sin not altogether unique in Israel; others before them looked on their privileges as if they were rights, considered what had been given them on loan as an enduring possession.³⁰ Still, theirs was a sin not confined to one people: To be one's own master is the temptation of every creature and the fall of many everywhere. But to return to the historic setting of the parable: When resistance becomes rebellion, when the cultivators of the vineyard not only refuse to make their payments but do away with the rightful heir, they forfeit their tenure and must needs be removed.

"He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and will give the vineyard to others" (Mk 12:9). As untrustworthy guardians of the vineyard, Israel's leaders will be dismissed; worse, the Jewish community will suffer disruption and the people cease to be the visible manifestation of God's reign. The kingdom of God will be taken from them and given into the care and custody of "a people yielding its fruits" (Mt 21:43), the Church. Yet, as with the parable of the possessed man, so with the allegory of the vinedressers we must be on our guard not to read into it something it is not meant to convey. In spite of the wickedness of the husbandmen, in spite of the dire consequences of their mutiny, Israel is not lost to God's love, for He is a constant lover. He does not repent, He will not revoke the call with which He called her, the Apostle proclaims (see Rom 11:29).

30. After his arrest, Stephen tells the members of the Sanhedrin that God gave Abraham no property in the land in which they now dwell, "not even a foot of land" (Ac 7:5); what He gave was a promise, no more and no less. Like the patriarch, then, a guest, a stranger in the land of Canaan (see Gen 23:4), Israel must be a pilgrim on earth.

THE KEYSTONE

Joined to the allegory of the vinedressers is another, that of the key-stone. As the first tells of the coming of the Son and of His death, so the second intimates the splendor of His resurrection which crowns His redemptive work:³¹

He looked on them and said: "What then is this that is written,

*The stone which the builders rejected
has become the keystone?*"³²

(Lk 20:17; see Mt 21:42; Ps 117:22)

The psalm verse Jesus quotes originally referred to Israel. Because of her political insignificance, she was rejected by the empire builders; while these mighty neighbors divided the conquests that Alexander the Great had left behind, they thought her too unimportant to be made part of their plans. But then came the victory of which Psalm 117 sings, probably that of the Maccabees; it proved that God had chosen from all nations this tiny people as the foundation and the pinnacle of His world-wide kingdom-to-be. Jesus sees in this verse an outline of His own destiny: Thrown aside by the leaders of His people like a useless stone, He will yet rise and be lifted up to become the kingly stone of the temple of the messianic age.³³ This total inversion, glory following upon degradation, is the work of the Father:

31. The two allegories are usually treated as a unit but they are, Buzy remarks, independent of one another in their literary structure. (See *op. cit.*, p. 418.) (It may well be that Jesus added the brief and quickly sketched allegory of the key-stone in order to combine the prophecy of His resurrection with that of His suffering.) Another exegete, however, sees in this allegory, one of the "favorite proof-texts for the resurrection and exaltation of the rejected Christ," the work of the early Church. (Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 58.)

32. If one takes into account the Syriac translation of this psalm verse and other testimonies of Christian and Jewish antiquity, *kephalē gōnias* should be rendered "topstone" or "keystone," rather than "cornerstone." The topstone is the one that completes an edifice (see Zach 4:7-9); the keystone, placed on the crown of an arch, is considered the one that binds the whole structure together. (See Joachim Jeremias, "Lithos," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1942, IV, 278.)

33. That the young Church understood Ps 117:22 as a scriptural proof for the suffering and glorification of Jesus is shown by the use St. Peter makes of it in his speech before the high priests and in his letter to Christ's faithful dwelling as strangers in a world of pagans (see Ac 4:11; 1 Pet 2:4-7). In the rabbinical tradition the same psalm verse is at times referred to Abraham, who is thought to have been scorned by the builders of the Tower of Babel, at other times to David, who before becoming king was ignored by the "builders," Samuel and his court. Still, the messianic interpretation of the stone rejected by some but valued by others is not unknown. (See Strack-Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, I, 875-876.)

*By the Lord this has been done,
and it is wonderful in our eyes.
(Mt 21:42; see Ps 117:23)*

With the dignity of the Messiah so great, those who flee His rule fly to ruin: "Everyone who falls upon that stone will be broken to pieces; but upon whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder" (Lk 20:18; see Mt 21:44).³⁴ As a clay vessel shatters when it is hurled against a stone, so any assault on the Messiah will destroy His assailant. Again, as the falling stone Daniel describes crushes the mightiest earthly power (see 2:34-45), so will the judging Christ break His enemies. Though Daniel's warning speaks neither of the undependable vinedressers nor of the foolish builders as such, but in a general way of every force hostile to Christ, still his warning has bearing on Israel's history.

Jesus is bound to Israel by ties of blood; what is more, He is in the deepest and fullest sense Israel's center, the keystone that perfects, and gives ultimate meaning to, the building whose foundation was laid by Moses and the prophets. Thus the fall of Jerusalem is fact and symbol: It marks the inner catastrophe that befell Israel because her builders had rejected the crowning stone. Only when Zechariah's prophetic vision is fulfilled, only when Zerubbabel brings forth the topstone from the ruins of the Temple and, amidst the jubilant shouts of the people, restores it to its old place (see Zach 4:7), will the stone no longer be a rock to stumble on but one that unites and sanctifies (see Is 8:14; 28:16).

THE WEDDING FEAST

In the Old Testament book of Proverbs, wisdom is said to have built a house of splendor and perfection—seven columns grace it. There she holds her banquet, where meat and wine, the food of truth and the drink of goodness, are ready for her guests. She sends forth her maidens to summon those whose company she especially desires, and she herself invites all who are willing:

34. This image is paralleled in rabbinical literature, with one great difference, however; there the crushing power of the stone is attributed to the people of Israel. Rabbi Simeon ben Jose ben Lakunia liked to compare Israel to stones but the nations to potsherds. "If a stone falls on a pot, woe to the pot!" (Est. R. 7:10; cf. *Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon, London: Soncino, 1939, IX, 85.)

*Come, eat of my food,
and drink of the wine I have mixed!
Forsake foolishness that you may live;
advance in the way of understanding.*
(Prov 9:5-6)

It may well be that wisdom's banquet inspired Jesus' story of the wedding feast:

The kingdom of heaven is like a king who made a marriage feast for his son. And he sent his servants to call in those invited to the marriage feast, but they would not come. Again he sent out other servants, saying: "Tell those who are invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast." But they made light of it, and went off, one to his farm, and another to his business; and the rest laid hold of his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

But when the king heard of it, he was angry; and he sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he said to his servants: "The marriage feast indeed is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy; go therefore to the crossroads, and invite to the marriage feast whomever you shall find." . . . For many are called, but few are chosen.

(Mt 22:2-9, 14)

Once more we breathe the air of allegory. The king, the king's son, the marriage feast—all these are biblical images rich in meaning. No more wondrous way to describe the glory of the messianic era than by images of wedding and banquet, images of love and joy.³⁵ Those invited to the banquet are the children of Israel whom, at Sinai,

35. Marriage is one of the great prophetic images for Yahweh's covenant with His people, a covenant to be kept faithfully and renewed ardently. (See, for instance, Os 2:19; Is 54:4-8; 62:4-5; Ez 16:7-14.) The image is no less familiar to rabbinical literature. When Rabbi Jose (150 A.D.) read the verse: "The Lord came from Sinai" (Deut 33:2), he understood it to mean that the Lord went forth to receive Israel as a bridegroom goes forth to meet his bride. (See Mekilta, Bahodesh on Ex. 19:10-17; cf. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, trans. J. Lauterbach, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1933-35, II, 218-219.) Again, in the sayings of Rabbi Eliezer we read that the day the Torah was to be given to Israel, Moses went into the camp and roused her from sleep: "Rise! The Bridegroom is coming and desires Israel, His bride, in order to lead her into the nuptial chamber and give her the Torah." (See Strack-Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, I, 970.) In these and similar rabbinical passages God is the Bridegroom: In the New Testament it is Jesus, the Redeemer, who lovingly ransoms His bride, the Church, so that she may enter into the fullness of glory (see Eph 5:25-28).

God made His "very own people," His "special possession, dearer to [Him] than all other people" (Deut 4:20; Ex 19:5); or, more exactly, the masters and teachers who, because of their influence, their responsibility, met with the king's particular attention. The servants are again the prophets and, even more, the heralds of the good news that the kingdom of heaven is at hand: the Baptist, Jesus Himself, and the apostles. How is it possible that the friends of the king prefer their private occupations to the royal bidding? How can the banquet mean so little to them that they would rather go about the affairs of the day than sit in his presence? We are not told what leads these men of noble standing to so ignoble a choice but we are shown, to the point of pain, that their rudeness in face of the king's desire for their company changes the course of Israel's history. Preoccupied with their own plans on how to establish God's rule, they hear the gospel, and yet do not hear it. And not hearing, they exclude themselves from the great feast.

When the friends of the king refuse, other guests are invited. Precisely who the newly favored are depends on the meaning we give to *diexodos tōn hodōn*. If we render it as "end of the street," that is, the spot where the street leaves the city and becomes a country road, then the newcomers are strangers, people from another town in contrast to the native inhabitants, in other words, the Gentiles in contrast to the Jews. But if we translate the Greek expression as "crossroads" or "street corners," then the new table companions taking the place of the noble and rich are people from the slums. Instead of the missing guests of honor who had been invited one by one, a nameless crowd is called to the feast, the "good and bad" (see Mt 22:10). The first interpretation links the parable of the great feast to the saying of Jesus that "many will come from the east and from the west, and will feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 8:11). The second interpretation links it to the parable of the net that is cast into the sea, gathering in fish of every kind, clean and unclean (see Mt 13:47). Again, the first interpretation parallels St. Paul's teaching that by Israel's stumbling, by her false step, "salvation has come to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:11), while the second parallels his marveling at the ways of God, so different from those of men. What the world thinks foolish, He chooses to shame the "wise"; what it considers weak, He cherishes to shame

the strong. He takes to Himself the despised so that mortal man may not mistake God's glory for his own (see 1 Cor 1:27-28).

If one keeps in mind the saying with which St. Matthew concludes the parable of the wedding feast: "Many are called, but few are chosen" (22:14)—a saying he also quotes on other occasions—one must lean, I think, toward the second interpretation. What the parable intimates is not the richness of God's reign but rather its "poverty," not its spreading to the nations but its small and humble beginning. Had the masters and teachers in Israel, the men of rank and dignity, accepted the invitation, the whole people would have flocked to the banquet; but as it was only a minority proved eager for the favor of the king. ("Many" and "few" in Jesus' saying should not be taken literally; here, as often in Scripture, "many" means "all" and "few," therefore, "fewer than expected.") Though only a small company responds, the feast is held; indeed, it is part of God's dealings with man that He accomplishes His purpose through a remnant.³⁶ Thus, like the words "many are called, but few are chosen," the whole parable, so full of dire prospects, contains not only the warning ever to be ready but also the good news: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom" (Lk 12:32).

THE UNPREPARED GUEST

I have not spoken of the alarming episode of the man without a wedding garment because with most exegetes I consider it a separate parable, which the Evangelist, for one reason or another, incorporated into the story of the wedding feast. No doubt, it is meant to threaten those who come to the banquet unprepared. Beyond that, it is open to various interpretations, as is shown by the opinions of Oesterley and Dodd. To the former, "the man without the wedding garment . . . represents the body of the Jewish religious leaders who are condemned to eternal punishment";³⁷ to the latter, St. Matthew's use of the story about the guest who appears with his robe unwashed seems to have been "intended to guard against the reception of the Gentiles into the Church on too easy terms."³⁸ Separate units though the stories

36. See Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich* (Freiburg: Herder, 1959), p. 131.

37. Oesterley, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

38. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 122; see also Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, pp. 37-38.

of wedding feast and careless guest are, their combination recalls a rabbinical parable of New Testament times. Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, who lived around 70 A.D., taught:

This may be compared to a king who summoned his servants to a banquet without appointing a time. The wise ones adorned themselves and sat at the door of the palace, "for," said they, "is anything lacking in a royal palace?" [The summons to enter, they thought, may come at any moment.] The fools went about their work, saying: "Can there be a banquet without preparations?" Suddenly the king desired [the presence of] his servants: the wise entered adorned, while the fools entered soiled. The king rejoiced at the wise but was angry with the fools. "Those who adorned themselves for the banquet," ordered he, "let them sit, eat and drink. But those who did not adorn themselves for the banquet, let them stand and watch."

Rabbi Meir's son-in-law said in Rabbi Meir's name: [Should the fools merely stand and watch, then they] would look as if they were attendants [and thus not suffer the punishment they deserve]. But both sit, the former eating and the latter hungering, the former drinking and the latter thirsting, for it is said: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart" (Is 65:13-14).³⁹

A definite similarity links the parabolic teaching of Jesus to the manner in which the rabbis instructed their hearers. There is the same inconcinnity about His parables and theirs, the same awkwardness and, at least to our Western mind, the same discordance between the introductory formula and the substance of the tale. Though parables may begin: "This may be compared to a king" or "The kingdom of heaven is like a king," their concern is not with the king but with the response of the servants and the first invited.⁴⁰ Here and there we

39. Shab. 153a; cf. *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino, 1935-48), *Shabbath*, pp. 781-782.

40. Like the rabbinical stories of the time, Jesus' parables begin in two different ways. There are those that simply start in the nominative case, with no introductory formula at all: "Hear! Behold, the sower went out to sow" (Mk 4:3); "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell in with robbers" (Lk 10:30); "A certain man had two sons" (Lk 15:11). Other gospel parables begin with a dative based on the Aramaic *le*. Most rabbinical parables start in a similar way: *mashal. le . . .*, which literally translated means: "A parable. Like . . ." and which is an abbreviation of "I shall tell you a parable. With what shall I com-

find the same metaphors: "king," "feast," "garment"; the same themes of everyday life: buying and selling, housekeeping and farming; and the same frequent use of stories that are part parable, part allegory.

Rabbi Johanan's parable is one of many rabbinical stories, and one of the best. Others are more diffuse, but all lack the freshness and vigor of the gospel parables and their concentration on the one thing necessary: the reign of God. The rabbis told their stories in order to interpret difficult verses of Scripture or to illustrate various religious and moral tenets, whereas Jesus told His in order to touch the very existence of His hearers, demanding that they do not delay their response to the divine summons.⁴¹ There is something of this appeal in Rabbi Johanan's tale, too, for it is a comment on the subtle admonition by which Rabbi Eliezer impressed on his disciples that if they wished to appear before God in heaven, they would have to be ready at all times. "Repent one day before your death," he said to them. Startled, they asked him: "Does a man know, then, on what day he will die?" "[Of course not.] All the more reason for him to repent today, lest he die tomorrow," the rabbi replied. "[And if he repents today,] his whole life will be spent in repentance."⁴² In this, Rabbi Johanan's story is closer to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins than to that of the wedding feast. There, Jesus pleads with His own to watch, for they know neither the day nor the hour of the bridegroom's return (see Mt 25:1-13). Still, to my mind, the words of Rabbis Johanan

pare the matter? Its case is as with so and so." Hence the dative introductions in Jesus' parables should be translated: "With the kingdom of heaven it is as with . . .," rather than: "The kingdom of heaven is like. . . ." For the kingdom of heaven is not "like a merchant" but rather like a single pearl of great price for which the merchant sells everything he owns (see Mt 13:45-46), not "like ten virgins" but rather like their going forth to meet the bridegroom (Mt 25:1), not "like a man who sowed good seed" but rather like an abundant harvest (Mt 13:24). (See Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, pp. 77-79.)

41. In attributing to the parables of Jesus a greater concreteness and immediacy, I do not wish to depreciate those of the rabbis. One cannot but admire the skill and ingenuity of their storytelling. On the nature of rabbinical parables see "Parable," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, IX, 513-514, where some significant examples are given. On the relative merits of rabbinical and gospel parables see Paul Fiebig, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu im Lichte der rabbinischen Gleichnisse des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1912), pp. 270-271, and Oesterley, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11. It is worth mentioning here that Joseph Klausner saw in Jesus the great teacher of moral life and the master of the art of parables. (See *Jesus of Nazareth*, New York: Macmillan, 1943, p. 414.)

42. See Shab. 153a; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 781.

and Eliezer do not have the intensity of the words of Jesus; theirs do not urge as His do.

THE DIALECTICS OF THE KINGDOM

THERE are many other parables of which I have not yet spoken, and of which I shall treat only a few. They seem to have a variety of themes but, basically, they are variations of a single motif: the fortune and misfortune, if these words are permissible, of God's love and Jesus' message in the world. The two opposite fates that God's care for man always encounters give these parables a universal character; still, they have a special significance for the children of Israel.

THE SOWER

That the parable of the sower is one of great moment is evident from the fact that all synoptic Gospels include it.⁴³ Its primary meaning is simple enough: God's word—the message of the kingdom—must be heard, more than that, affirmed, accepted, accomplished. What the kingdom of heaven needs is "doers of the word" (Jas 1:22; see also Eph 4:15). Addressed to men of all times, this catholic lesson must have moved the multitude by the shore as if it were meant for them alone (see Mt 13:1-3). Again, the parable may well have answered dark questions that must have beset the disciples and the first Christian generation: Why, of all men, did the leaders of the people, whose office it was to guard the traditions and hopes of the fathers, show themselves hostile to the gospel? Why did they close their hearts to the proclamation that the messianic days were at hand? Why did Israel not obtain what she was seeking (see Rom 11:7)? Simply because God would not establish His reign—such is His magnanimity—without man's co-operation. As the seed cannot flower without the right soil, so the message of the kingdom of heaven cannot prevail unless man receives it.

In addition to this general answer, the individual images seem to indicate some of the obstacles that kept Jesus' preaching from having an abundant harvest. Is it not characteristic of Satan, the adversary, to rob the heart of the word pregnant with grace (see Mk 4:15)? Is not the ground by the wayside like those Scribes and Pharisees who

43. See Mt 13:3-9, 18-23; Mk 4:2-9, 13-20; Lk 8:4-8, 11-15.

slowly and imperceptibly harden themselves against His message? Is it not their influence that makes many in Israel believe that what is decisive is to be of Abraham's seed? Thus Jesus has to stress that no privilege, however great, confers upon man a claim to God's kingdom; God reigns only where man opens his whole self to the word, only where God and man meet in love.

The image of the rocky ground, too, tells something of Jesus' audience. Those who receive the word with joy but in time of persecution fall away are like those Galileans who so eagerly listen to the Good News that even the air is filled with promise, but just as readily give the enemies of the gospel entrance into their hearts. Finally, the thorn-bushes, figures of the cares of the world, of the deceitfulness of riches, and of the desire for things other than God's reign (see Mk 4:19), point to Jewish officialdom which, like many a ruling caste of other times and peoples, is slave to wealth and world.⁴⁴

Yet, if the parable of the sower is read as the story, indeed, the fate of God's word in Israel, then not only the dry road, the stony ground, and the stifling thicket must be found there but also the good earth that yields fruit thirty, sixty, even a hundred times. The trust of Mary, the devotion of Joseph, the warmth of Elizabeth, the longing of Simeon and Anna, the affection of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, the zeal of the apostles, the ardor of the little Church of Jerusalem, the faith of the many Jewish followers of Jesus whose names went unrecorded—all these are a soil so rich that the Church is still nourished by it.⁴⁵ And on the great day, when Israel as a whole will turn to her Messiah, she will be as never before a field freed from smothering rocks and bushes, whose hundredfold fruit will be for the whole of Christendom like "life from the dead" (Rom 11:15).

44. In the opinion of Dodd the explanation of the parable of the sower as found in our Gospels (see Mt 13:18-23; Mk 4:13-20; Lk 8:11-18) did not come from the lips of Jesus; it was rather the work of the infant Church, taking up His word. Dodd sees it as "a striking example of the way in which the early Church reinterpreted sayings and parables of Jesus to suit its changing needs. The interpretation assumes a long period during which the effectiveness and genuineness of Christian belief are tested by 'the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches,' and by 'persecution and affliction because of the Word.' The parable is made to yield warning and encouragement to Christians under such conditions. The interpretation is indeed a moving sermon upon the parable as text." (*Op. cit.*, p. 181.)

45. The fervor of the infant Church and its lasting influence is lovingly described by Charles Journet in "The Mysterious Destinies of Israel," *The Bridge*, II, 57-59.

THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

No other parable has suffered so many different, even opposing interpretations—some of them truly fantastic—as that of the laborers in the vineyard. First at dawn, then in the morning, again at noon and in the afternoon, finally an hour before the end of the working day, the owner of a vineyard goes out to hire laborers. With the first crew of hired hands, he settles on a denarius as the day's pay; with the rest, he makes no agreement, only promising them fair wages. When in the evening all of them, including those who worked only for an hour, receive a denarius, there is excitement, even outbursts of indignation. Those hired at dawn, who have borne the day's burden and worked under the blazing sun, reproach the householder with injustice, but he rejects the accusation by reminding them of the morning's bargain. What audacity to deny him the right to be generous to the men of the last hour, since those who were with him from the beginning received their just due! (see Mt 20:1-16).

In order to reconcile the parable of the laborers with the norms of justice and thus to lessen its paradox, many exegetes have added some features of their own to the facts given. One says that those hired near the end of the day showed greater zeal for work so that in the brief span of an hour they accomplished more than those who entered the vineyard first⁴⁶ and who, by their lack of diligence, above all by their outcries and mutterings, lost every claim to a reward. Others hold that what the vineyard's owner values most is the will to work; since that will is the same with all the laborers, even though some cannot fulfill their desire until late in the day, the wages are the same for all of them. Stranger still is the attempt to harmonize the whole parable with Jesus' saying: "Even so the last shall be first, and the first last" (Mt 20:16). Such an attempt inevitably ends in bias and error: "All this [that is, all that happened at the hour of payment] proves

46. Interestingly enough, there is a rabbinical parable about workmen in which the motif is accomplishment: A king hired many laborers, one of whom brought greater understanding to his work than was needed. Thus the king made him the companion of his walks. When in the evening the royal attendant received the same wages as the other men, they murmured: "We have toiled the whole day, while this one has toiled for only two hours, yet the king has given us and him the same amount." To this the king replied: "He has done more in two hours than you have during the whole day." (See *The Jerusalem Talmud*, Ber. 5c, as quoted by Oesterley, *op. cit.*, p. 108, and Fiebig, *op. cit.*, p. 78.)

the Lord's saying, namely, that the Jews are excluded from the Church and the kingdom of heaven, while the Gentiles take first place."⁴⁷

These and similar interpretations are contradicted by the unmistakable wording of the parable. It never occurs to those hired first to complain that they have to wait longer for their pay than their fellow workers. (The Palestinian worker of those days had time and did not mind waiting.) Their understandable protest is against the equality of the wages: "These last have worked a single hour, and thou hast put them on a level with us, who have borne the burden of the day's heat" (Mt 20:12). Hence the verse on the destiny of the first and the last, most likely a proverb, which appears in so many different contexts throughout the Gospels⁴⁸ that it has been called the *Wanderlogion*, cannot possibly be part of the parable. This is no new finding; no less a man than St. John Chrysostom noticed the discrepancy between the parable and its apparent conclusion. "The end," he writes, "is not in accord with the beginning. Indeed, it is the opposite. . . . The last verse is not a conclusion Jesus draws from the parable, for the first were not the last but, against every expectation, all receive the same reward."⁴⁹

Undoubtedly, the real significance of the parable is in the words of the vineyard's owner: "Have I not a right to do what I choose? Or art thou envious because I am generous?" (Mt 20:15). Thus the story of the laborers who are not paid according to the laws of natural justice proclaims the sovereignty of God's goodness, the free gift of His love. The individual persons and features of the story serve no other purpose than to confirm this message; like the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son, they are a dark background for the sudden rays of grace that fill the lives of those who were hired last.

The only role the parable assigns to the laborers who have worked all day and receive the agreed wages, is to bring out all the more strongly

47. Augustin Calmet, *Commentarius literalis in omnes libros Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (Venetiis: Typis Sebastiani Coleti, 1756), p. 433; see also Leopold Fonck, S.J., *Die Parabeln des Herrn im Evangelium* (Innsbruck: Rauch, 1927), p. 355.

48. See Mt 19:30; 22:14; Mk 9:34; 10:31; Lk 13:30.

49. In Mt. Hom., LXIV, 3-4 (PG 58:612-614). See also Buzy, *op. cit.*, p. 225, who sees in Mt 20:16 a logion attached to the parable because of a certain verbal resemblance.

the unusual way in which the last hired are called to work, and rewarded. The parable considers the problem of whether or not there are men who—to speak unparabolically—earn God's reward as little as Mk 2:17, Lk 5:32, 15:32, Mt 5:45 consider the question of whether or not there are really just men. It is simply a matter of setting before our eyes the image of those who are rewarded "without merit or worth. . . ." [The gospel of God's generous love] does not cancel the thought that God rewards; what the parable emphasizes is that reward is not proportionate to performance. Indeed, the relationship between performance and reward is such that it cannot be understood by those who think only in terms of an exact "work-merit" pattern, who see God's relationship to men as that of a scrupulously calculating employer towards his employees. So great is God's love [freely pouring its gifts over His children] that it remains incomprehensible to those who think along no other lines than human justice, who see God but as king and judge and are thus puzzled by the good news of Jesus.⁵⁰

What is it, then, that the parable of God's sovereign goodness wishes to tell Israel? Certainly not that she will be last, nor that she will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven—the parable in no way touches on the relationship between Church and Synagogue. Rather is it a call to Israel, and thus to every man, to rethink the vital question of all religious observance, that of merit and reward, and to reshape life accordingly. God guided and disciplined Israel as a father his son (see Deut 8:5). He promised reward to the faithful and threatened punishment to the sinners, He blessed the obedient and cursed the disobedient (see Ex 20:12; Deut 28). Again, in the book of Judges, Israel's history conforms to a strict design: The people's sin is followed by God's punishment, the people's conversion by God's help. Legitimate though this belief in divine retribution is, it is not without danger: All too easily the knowledge that God rewards becomes a claim on Him and a demand for recompense; all too easily, love turns into calculation.

There can be no doubt, I think, that the ancient rabbis did not sufficiently guard themselves against this hazard. There were those who looked upon salvation as the fruit of human effort; in their eyes, the many commandments given to Israel were but a means of acquiring merit. They assumed, it seems, a perfect equation between man's good

50. Herbert Preisker on reward in the New Testament in "Misthos," *Theol. Wörterbuch zum N. T.*, IV, 723.

deeds and God's good will: "According to the labor is the reward," reads one of their basic sayings.⁵¹ In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, then, Israel is asked to relinquish this attitude, no matter how natural and how deeply rooted in her religious development; she is asked to forget what is behind and strain forward to what is before her (see Phil 3:13). With St. Paul, she must learn that none is made just before God by the works of the Law (see Rom 3:20), that no mere human toiling can earn grace and everlasting life. She must open herself to God's goodness, freely given; she must let herself be loved and drawn by Him without boasting of her own merits. With St. Peter, she must learn that to him who abandons all for Jesus' sake, no other reward is promised than the glory of God, a gift so high that it cannot be deserved, that it cannot be earned.⁵²

51. Ab. 23:5; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 77. The notion that the Law and its many commandments were given to Israel to make her worthy of divine favor and enable her to receive reward is not infrequent in rabbinical literature. (See, for instance, Mak. 23b; cf. *B. Talmud, Makkoth*, p. 165; Lev. R. 31:8; cf. *Midrash Rabbah*, IV, 402; Mekilta, Pisha on Ex. 13:1-4; cf. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, I, 131-132.)

Still, it would be misleading to equate Judaism, as is sometimes done, with service of God merely for the sake of reward. I should give an unfair picture of rabbinical thought were I not to mention the prayer with which, morning after morning, the devout Jew turns to God: "Sovereign of all worlds! Not because of our righteous acts do we lay our supplications before thee, but because of thine abundant mercies. What are we? What is our life? What is our piety? What is our righteousness? What our helpfulness? What our strength? What our might? What shall we say before thee, O Lord our God and God of our fathers? Are not all the mighty men as nought before thee, the men of renown as though they had not been, the wise as if without knowledge, and the men of understanding as if without discernment?" (*The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, trans. and ed. Joseph H. Hertz, New York: Bloch, 1952, pp. 27-29.)

In like spirit, an ancient commentary on Psalm 141:1 declares: "One man puts his trust in the decorous and upright acts he has performed. Another puts his trust in the acts of his fathers. But I put my trust in thee. Even though I have no righteous acts, answer me [O Lord], because I have called unto thee." (See *The Midrash on Psalms*, trans. William G. Braude, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, p. 350.) There is also the teaching of Rabbi Johanan that from Moses, who prayed as one not demanding his right but asking for grace, man should learn that no creature has any claim on his Creator. (See Deut. R. 2:1; cf. *Midrash Rabbah*, VII, 30.) The list of quotations could easily be extended. I shall note only one more saying, almost Pauline in character, that all men are in need of God's kindness, of His favor. (See Gen. R. 60:2; cf. *Midrash Rabbah*, II, 526.)

52. A glimpse of the Catholic teaching on merit may be appropriate here. The Council of Trent declared that "in Scripture much is ascribed to good works. According to Christ's promise, 'whoever gives to one of these little ones but a cup of cold water to drink . . . shall not lose his reward' (Mt 10:42). And, according to the Apostle's witness, 'our present light affliction, which is for the moment, prepares for us an eternal weight of glory that is beyond all measure' (2 Cor 4:17).

THE TWO DEBTORS

A kindred theme, that of guilt and forgiveness, is set forth in the parable of two debtors who could not pay their debt but had it remitted by a kindly creditor (see Lk 7:36-50). So much is this parable part of its context that any attempt to interpret it must not separate one from the other.

As a guest of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus is greeted with courtesy but restraint. Impressed, perhaps, by a sermon the young Rabbi preached in the Synagogue, Simon has invited Him to a banquet. But his manners show that he has not made up his mind about this man who, admittedly, speaks like a prophet; thus he waits for what the next few hours will disclose. According to Simon's code, his famous guest commits a dreadful faux pas. The naïve ignorance He seems to betray is enough to turn the host's open reserve into secret scorn: "This man, were He a prophet, would surely know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner" (Lk 7:39).⁵³ Though this judgment is made in the stillness of the heart, Jesus the Prophet knows it and wishes to correct it. Thus He tells of two men who run into debt, and yet are forgiven.⁵⁴ The marvel of their release compels Simon to admit that the greater the guilt that is forgiven, the deeper the love that renders thanks. But does he realize that the woman at Jesus' feet, bedewing them with tears, wiping them with her hair, kissing⁵⁵ and anointing them, is no longer a sinner; that grace has made her truly just in the sight of God? Having

Still, far be it from a Christian to trust or glory in himself, and not in the Lord (see 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17). His goodness toward all men is so great that He wills to be *their* merits what are in truth *His* gifts." (Denziger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 810.)

53. In this text "sinner" may well mean prostitute. In any case, delicacy of heart prompts St. Luke not to give the woman's name. It is more than doubtful that she is either Mary of Magdala (see Lk 8:2) or Mary of Bethany (see Jn 11:1).

54. Here as elsewhere we must guard against the temptation of identifying characters of a parable with persons in real life, in this instance with those in the house of Simon the Pharisee. The man who owes his creditor fifty denarii is not necessarily Simon nor is it Jesus' intention to declare that Simon's guilt is a tenth of that of the woman at His feet. What Jesus wishes His host to realize is quite different: Though he considers himself in every way superior to the sinner, as a lover of God he is her inferior. Forgiveness and peace, the wonders of the messianic reign that are hers, still escape him. (See Fonck, *op. cit.*, p. 777.)

55. The Talmud tells of a man accused of murder kissing the feet of his lawyer who argued the case so well that the accusation was dismissed and the defendant's life saved. (See Sanh. 27b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 161-163.)

been pardoned, she is overwhelmed by the compassion of the Master; a boundless gratitude wells up from her heart and overflows into gestures showing that nothing matters but the love shown her and the love she is allowed to show. Gladdened, Jesus turns to His host: "Wherefore I say to thee, her sins, many as they are, are forgiven her, and thus she abounds in loving gratitude" (Lk 7:47).⁵⁶

The coolness with which Simon meets his guest proves that his encounter with Jesus is not what it should be: an encounter with the Messiah. Convinced that he is without guilt, he deprives himself of the wonder of forgiveness and the inner freedom and joy it brings. When Jesus reproaches Simon for not having treated Him as warmly and lavishly as did the despised woman, He may also be directing His reproach to Simon's fellows and friends, as He no doubt directs it to all those of the same mind in ages to come. Cautious is the reception of the learned Pharisees. Because of their influence, God's bridal nation as a whole fails to offer the gifts His Anointed has every right to expect: "Thou gavest me no water for my feet. . . . Thou gavest me no kiss. . . . Thou didst not anoint my head with oil" (Lk 7:44-46).

But the woman who was a sinner makes luminous the hidden role of the "poor" in Israel of whom the first beatitude speaks.⁵⁷ Where others fail, she does not: Her tenderness in receiving Jesus is like spring's first flower, shy yet bold. Truly converted, she is one of the

56. In rendering this saying of Jesus I have followed the lead of the Jerusalem Bible. Canon Osty's translation there reads: "Since she has shown me so much love." ("L'évangile selon saint Luc," *La Sainte Bible*, trans. E. Osty, Paris: Cerf, 1953, pp. 71-72.) The Vulgate, however, and all the vernacular editions based on or guided by it, translate: "Because she has loved much." The Greek original permits both versions, the one giving the clause a causal meaning and the other giving it an explicatory one. The context, however, seems to demand the one I have adopted.

According to the Vulgate and all the exegetes who lean on it, it is the love of the unnamed woman that brought her God's forgiveness; in our rendering, her love is brought about by divine pardon. The two conceptions are not really contradictory. For it is the grace of love in the heart of the sinful woman that ripens her decision to break with her former ways and start afresh; it is contrite love that leads her to the house of Simon and to the feet of Jesus, and it is a happy and grateful love that finds expression in her tears, her kisses, and her extravagant use of aromatic oil. Love, then, is the root as well as the fruit of forgiveness.

57. The role of Yahweh's poor, Israel's elite, the holy remnant that is in every way God's own, is superbly treated by Albert Gelin in *Les pauvres de Yahvé* (Paris: Cerf, 1953) and Barnabas M. Ahern, C.P., "Mary and the Poor of Israel," *Cross and Crown*, II, 3 (September 1959), pp. 278-291.

"publicans and harlots" who are among the first to enter the kingdom of heaven. May she not also be the model of the Israel of the last days who, aglow with love, will return to her Messiah?

*In those days, at that time . . .
the men of Israel and of Juda shall come,
Weeping as they come, to seek the Lord, their God;
to their goal in Sion they shall ask the way.
"Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord
with covenant everlasting never to be forgotten."
(Jer 50:4-5)*

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

The parable of the two debtors tells how forgiveness enriches the soul, the parable of the Pharisee and the publican what the soul needs in order to be forgiven. Obviously, the two are akin; both reproach, both demand.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and began to pray thus within himself: "O God, I thank thee that I am not like the rest of men, robbers, dishonest, adulterers, or even like this publican. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I possess." But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me the sinner!" I tell you, this man went back to his home justified rather than the other.⁵⁸

(Lk 18:10-14)

There were men in the Israel of Jesus' time, as there were later and are today in the Christian world, who did not heed the prophetic message of pardon by sheer grace, expressed in images like those of washing and purification, infusion of a new spirit and creation of a clean heart.⁵⁹ Instead, they relied too much on their own efforts, assuming their own good deeds would wipe out their sins. It is such self-confidence, blind to human insufficiency, that animates the Pharisee

58. Generally, the last sentence quoted is rendered in an exclusive sense. The Greek text, however, and what must be the underlying Aramaic, also permit a comparative rendering: "This man went back to his home more justified than the other." In this case, the meaning would be that the Pharisee's justice rests on his own accomplishment, on his observance of the Law, the justice of the publican, however, on God's goodness. A gift of God, it fills, indeed, permeates the soul.

59. See Ez 36:25-27; Jer 33:7-8; Ps 50:1-2, 7-12.

of the parable.⁶⁰ A self-made man in matters of the spirit, he thinks of himself as the cause of his salvation; he is convinced that the righteousness of his life is his own work, the fruit of unrelenting observance of the Law. No wonder he feels justified in despising those who do not exert themselves as he does, not to speak of those who openly transgress the commandments.

Yet it would be grossly unfair to see in this particular Pharisee the prototype of the pharisaic brotherhood or the embodiment of Jewish spirituality.⁶¹ We must never forget that Jesus found disciples among the Pharisees, and by no means the worst, and that, were it possible to regard Him as a member of one faction or another, it would seem far more correct to consider Him a Pharisee than a Sadducee or Qumranite.⁶² Moreover, we must distinguish between Pharisees and "pharisaism," as we must distinguish between Jesuits and their caricature, "Jesuitry," or between clerics and the "clericalism" that might tempt them. If "Jesuitry" be a Machiavellian use of mental reservation that makes truth and lie look alike, then it is the very opposite of what true Jesuits have ever thought or practiced. And if "clericalism" is an arrogant, self-seeking rule by the clergy, then it contradicts the

60. That this self-reliant man was not unreal and his existence not confined to the parable, is clear from a talmudic passage of the first century A.D. There the rabbis teach that on leaving the *Bet ha-Midrash*, the house of study, a man should say: "I give thanks to thee, O Lord my God, that thou hast set my portion with those who sit in the *Bet ha-Midrash* and thou hast not set my portion with those who sit in [street] corners [that is, the shopkeepers or the unlettered], for I rise early and they rise early, but I rise early for words of Torah and they rise early for frivolous talk; I labor and they labor, but I labor and receive a reward and they labor and do not receive a reward; I run and they run, but I run to the life of the future world and they run to the pit of destruction." (Ber. 28b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 172.)

61. In an essay on biblical themes of Mariology, Louis Bouyer, Orat., remarks that some Christians cannot rid themselves of the notion that the Judaism of Christ's time was the very opposite of His gospel. To make the figure of Jesus stand out, they portray Judaism as dead legalism or as a carnal religion. Had Jewish life really been thus we should be forced to assume that Jesus and His teaching were dropped into Palestine like a meteorite; we should also be compelled to hold a monophysitic view of the Incarnation and thus imagine the human nature of the Christ to have been absorbed in, indeed abolished by, the divine nature. A religion purely legalistic could never have produced a being so full of faith and generosity as was Mary. As a matter of fact, in the postexilic era an ever-growing spiritual current moved through the Jewish world, which little by little detached Israel's hope from the earth and gave mystical overtones to the piety of the Law. Unfortunately, they are not appreciated by the majority of Christians. (See "Les thèmes bibliques de la théologie mariale," *Bible et vie chrétienne*, VII, September-November 1954, 16-17.)

62. See Hilaire Duesberg, O.S.B., "The Trial of the Messiah," *The Bridge*, I, 236.

very calling of those who are to serve God and man, who are singled out, not to lord over their fellow Christians but to be co-workers of their joy (see 2 Cor 1:23). "Pharisaism," too, when content with façade and gesture, when preoccupied with unessentials and thus forgetting the heart of the spiritual life, is the betrayal of an ideal: An originally pure and earnest zeal for the Law has grown overweening and become excessive. Who would dare assert that "pharisaism," so understood, was confined to the days of the gospel? True, it spoke an important word at the trial of Jesus, but it also inspired the synod that deposed and exiled St. John Chrysostom as it guided the court that condemned St. Joan of Arc to the stake. It wearied the lives of St. Francis of Assisi, of St. Teresa of Avila, of St. John Bosco, and of many others; throughout the history of Christendom it unwittingly sought to hinder the work of the Spirit.⁶³

When one remembers the omnipresence of "pharisaism," one can hardly see in the Pharisee of the parable the image of the Jew, and in the publican the image of the Gentile-become-Christian. The first, bookkeeper of his soul and accountant of his merits, is rather the symbol of perpetual self-righteousness, a vice that seeks its victims everywhere, while the second, beggar before the face of God, is the figure of the "poor" who live by trust. Convinced that they have nothing to offer, they expect everything from Him and thus are made the heirs of heaven (see Mt 5:3).

THE PRODIGAL SON

We have journeyed through the realm of parables, and our pilgrimage ends best at what we may call, with Charles Péguy, the "gate of hope." Arranged freely, here are some of the poet's lines:

*All parables are beautiful, my child, all parables great, all
parables lovable.
All parables are the word and the Word. . . .
All come from the heart, all go to the heart,
They speak to the heart.
Yet first among them are the three parables of hope. . . .
And among these, it is the third parable that walks ahead. . . .
It touches a unique spot in the heart of men, a secret spot, a
hidden spot. . . .
The spot of pain, the spot of misery, the spot of hope.*

63. See *ibid.*, pp. 237-238.

*All parables are beautiful, my child, all parables are great. . . .
 But over this one, men have wept, hundreds, thousands,
 Hundreds of thousands.
 And if someone hears the parable for the hundredth time
 It is as if he heard it for the first time:
 "A man had two sons. . . ." 64*

The story of the son who was lost (see Lk 15:11-32) needs no explanation; in fact, it is the explanation of all other parables, indeed of the whole gospel. It is the ever-open door, the never-silent cry for man's return, the sweet utterance of unbounded mercy. As for all men, so for Israel the parable is "a ray that will not be snuffed out." 65

But who is the elder son, so ill-tempered and jealous of his younger brother? The exegetes of antiquity, even the majority of moderns, have no doubt: The son who has toiled in his father's fields season after season, year after year, who is correct in every way but craves recognition and rank, stands for the Pharisees or, better still, for the people of Israel anxiously seeking to preserve its prerogatives. Only in recent times have exegetes suggested another interpretation. 66 According to them, the elder son, very much like the first-called workers in the vineyard, is little more than a supernumerary. His presence in the parable is, above all, to set off the role of the younger, though as the representative of common sense, baffled, indeed angered, by the foolishness of mercy, he also points to the otherness of God. The principal actors in the drama, then, are the father and the son who was lost.

64. Charles Péguy, *Le porche du mystère de la deuxième vertu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1941), pp. 158-163.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 168. In the early second century A.D. Rabbi Meir sought to illustrate the mercy God offers His people by a father's appeal to his dissolute son: "This can be compared to the son of a king who took to evil ways. The king sent a tutor to him who appealed to him saying: 'Repent, my son.' The son, however, sent him back to his father [with the message]: 'How can I have the effrontery to return? I am ashamed to come before you.' Thereupon his father sent back word: 'My son, is a son ever ashamed to return to his father? And is it not to your father that you will be returning?' Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, sent Jeremiah to Israel when they sinned, and said to him: 'Go, say to my children: Return.'" (Deut. R. 2:24; cf. *Midrash Rabbah*, VII, 53.)

A rabbinical parallel to the story of the prodigal son, Rabbi Meir's parable has the beauty of restraint. Jesus' parable, however, vibrates with life. The father's patient and unwearied waiting; the son's disgust with his wasted life, his sorrow at his wrongdoings, his readiness to take the lowest place in his father's house; finally, the joy, indeed, merriment over the son's return—all these warm and impassioned features make the hearer eager to act.

66. See Preisker, *loc. cit.*, p. 723, and Oesterley, *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 188.

Who is this lost son? Who else but the sinner, every sinner, whatever the outrage that estranges him from God, whether he lived a thousand years ago or lives today.

*When the sinner departs from God, my child,
The farther he departs, the farther he travels into abandoned
lands, the more he loses himself.
Away among bushes and rocks he throws,
As something useless, cumbersome and boring, the most precious
goods. . . .
But there is one word of God which he must not throw away. . . .
When the darkness
Increases
And veils his eyes there is one divine treasure which he must
not throw among the thistles by the road.
For there is one mystery that follows, one word that follows.
Even into the farthest farness. . . .
There remains within him a spot that pains, a spot of reflection,
a spot of restlessness. A bud of hope. . . .
The third word of hope, "A man had two sons."⁶⁷*

Every son who has fled from home knows that he can return at any moment, that the Father always awaits him. But there is one son, particularly favored, for whom the arms of heaven are opened even more widely.

*Is Ephraim not my favored son⁶⁸
the child in whom I delight?
Often as I threaten him,
I still remember him with favor;
My heart stirs for him,
I must show him mercy, says the Lord.
(Jer 31:20)*

SUMMATION

WHILE a reading oblivious of the rules that must guide the interpretation of parables may find in them a wholesale condemnation of Israel,

67. Péguy, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-168.

68. In figurative and prophetic language Ephraim, because of its dominant influence among the other tribes, often stands for the whole of the Northern Kingdom. (See, for instance, Is 7:2-8 and Os 5; 6:4.) The Lord's "feelings" toward the Israelite kingdom, as expressed by Jeremiah, apply to the Israel of all times.

an objective and dispassionate exegesis hears in them, no doubt, the voice of alarm but no less the voice of hope. Even when Israel's leaders are rebuked or the people threatened, rebuke and threat are disguises of love. In unveiling this love, exegesis cannot fail to contribute to the work of reconciliation between Church and Synagogue.

All the gospel narratives disclose Jesus as a son of Israel; the parables do so in a special way, for everything about them bears the unmistakable imprint of His native Palestine. Their literary form, their imagery and language plainly reflect the conditions and customs of the land in which He chose to be born. Though sisters to the parables of the ancient rabbis, the parables of Jesus excel them by their refreshing vigor, their compelling drama and their eschatological dimension. Yet as they reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of God, they also manifest Jesus' humanity, His reverence for the least of things, His care for all that *is*, His feeling for the seemingly absurd so inseparable from our dignity.

In the parables Jesus spoke as a prophet, the greatest of the prophets. Like them and yet unlike them, He lifted the darkness of human existence up to the everlasting light and confronted the events of the day with the "eternal now" of God. He knew that He was called to awaken Israel in the most critical hour of her history so that she might see the portents of the time, and act. Hence the urgency, the clarity, the immediacy of His words. No apocalypticist lost in mist and obscurity, He was the Prophet come to cast fire on the earth.

THE "HARDENING" OF ISRAEL

There is a passage in the Gospels, however, that seems to say precisely that Jesus came to spread the pall of night over His own people. When His disciples inquire into the meaning of the parable of the sower, St. Luke has Jesus say: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that

*'Seeing they may not see,
and hearing they may not understand.'*"
(Lk 8:10; Is 6:9) ⁶⁹

Ever since patristic days this "logion of obduration" has been a perpetual crux to exegetes; it seems to contradict the very nature of

69. For other synoptic versions of Jesus' answer see Mk 4:11-12 and Mt 13:13-15.

parables whose purpose it is to ease understanding, not hinder it. Thus St. John Chrysostom remarks that had Jesus wished to go unrecognized by His people, He would have had to remain silent rather than speak in parables.⁷⁰ Hilaire Duesberg, too, holds that a literal interpretation of the words of Jesus, as St. Luke and St. Mark transmit them, would subvert all pedagogy, even deny the very meaning of God's coming in the flesh.⁷¹ For who could possibly conceive of the everlasting Word having become audible so as not to be heard, of Jesus speaking for no other purpose than to harden the hearts of His hearers?

No doubt, at first sight, Jesus' mission was, like Isaiah's, a failure: In His as in the prophet's days, many were insensible to things divine and indifferent to the call of repentance. Small wonder, then, that Jesus should have used Isaiah's castigation of the people's dullness to foretell the fate of His gospel. It may well be, as some modern exegetes believe, that Jesus quoted Isaiah in another context and that the Synoptics attached His saying to the parable of the sower in order to answer a question that vexed the infant Church. Frequently Jews of the dispersion as well as gentile Christians would ask how it happened that Israel's Messiah was not understood by so many of His kinsmen, that He was even rejected by the Scribes, and this in the name of Scripture. The Church answered that what happened was simply what Scripture had foretold:

*Seeing they may see, but not perceive;
and hearing they may hear, but not understand;
Lest perhaps at any time they should be converted,
and their sins forgiven them.*

(Mk 4:12; Is 6:9-10)

"Divine foreknowledge," then, is the mysterious answer that Scripture and Church give to the mystery of a gospel ignored, even resisted. For biblical perspective likes to shorten distance, shut out what is to the left and the right of the viewer, and focus on no other than God, the Lord of history. The "that" with which St. Mark introduces the Isaian utterance may therefore have the same meaning as St.

70. *In Mt. Hom.*, XLV (PG 58:473).

71. See Hilaire Duesberg, *Jésus, prophète, et docteur de la Loi* (Maredsous: Casterman, 1955), p. 117.

Matthew's frequent formula: "This was done that thereby might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet."⁷²

Whereas St. Mark has Jesus say: "To those outside, all things are treated in parables *that* seeing they may see, but not perceive" (4:11-12), St. Matthew takes some of the sharpness out of these words when he gives them in this form: "This is why I speak to them in parables, *because* seeing they do not see" (13:13). "That" is changed to "because," in other words, what one evangelist calls the purpose of Jesus' parables, the other calls their reason. In spite of this change, St. Matthew's passage remains bewildering to us who are heirs of Greek precision, a quality so different from the fervor and impetuosity of Hebrew speech.

In his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Père Lagrange points out that the Evangelist quotes Isaiah according to the Septuagint and not to the Hebrew version, which reads:

*Listen carefully, but you shall not understand!
 Look intently, but you shall know nothing!
 You are to make the heart of this people sluggish,
 to dull their ears and close their eyes;
 Else their eyes will see, their ears hear,
 their heart understand,
 and they will turn and be healed.*

(6:9-10)

Père Lagrange continues that, by using the Septuagint, St. Matthew seems to have softened the "thrust" of the Hebrew original; for the future and the past tenses in the Greek text, taking the place of the Hebrew imperative, lessen what seems to be the divine causality of the people's obduration. In presenting to Greek readers God's powerful call to the prophet, the Septuagint had to mitigate the violence of biblical language, a language unspoiled by reflection.

It was Isaiah's burden to have his people discern between God's ways and their own, between the following of His will and the road to their undoing. He was sent to make a last effort. Knowing, however, that even this last effort would be in vain, God bids him, as it were: "Get on with your task! Don't mince your words! Speak freely and forcefully! Harden them! Destroy them!" Strange as it may

72. See, for instance, Mt 1:22; 2:15, 17; 4:14; 8:17.

sound, this bidding is, in the words of Père Lagrange, "the language of love, Mercy's uttermost plea: 'Look at what you are doing! You compel me to renounce what my heart desires for you, your healing.'" To St. Matthew, then, Isaiah's passion prefigures that of Jesus.⁷³

As I have said, biblical speech is different from our own. But is it always so? Is not the "logion of obduration" akin to words born of grief, of a grief that will not accept defeat? A father or mother, for instance, might say to a son about to embark on a career of crime: "Just go ahead! Keep on stealing! Rob, murder! Till they send you to the electric chair!" It is loving fear for their wayward son that disguises itself as a command; dreading the future, they feel they have no other weapon than irony with which to prod the shriftless. May we not say, then, that the prophet, despairing of an unrepentant people, yet hoping against hope that they would understand, change, and be healed, presented the seemingly inevitable disaster as if it were the purpose of his preaching? And may we not say that Jesus sought to stir His kinsmen with the same supreme irony so that they might see, hear, understand, turn, and be healed?

THE RESPONSE OF ISRAEL

It was not the will of the Master of parables to turn His own kinsmen into obdurate men, without vision and without the life of grace; rather was it His will to disclose "the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Lk 8:10). But in doing so He made known which heart was open and which closed, who was of good will and who was not. Thus the parables brought pardon or judgment, communion or estrangement.⁷⁴ And this was the secret of God's kingdom: He who differed greatly from the expected Redeemer *was* the expected Redeemer; His advent

73. Marie-Joseph Lagrange, O.P., *Evangelie selon saint Matthieu* (Paris: Gabalda, 1948), pp. 260-261.

74. See also the opinions of Jeremias (*The Parables of Jesus*, pp. 12-15) and Oesterley (*op. cit.*, pp. 51-56). In the course of his discussion, Oesterley quotes Claude G. Montefiore as saying that the fundamental idea of the "logion of obduration" was not unknown to the ancient rabbis. (Cf. *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings*, London: Macmillan, 1930, pp. 252-253.) There is, for instance, the rabbinical saying that the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, differ from those of flesh and blood. While a mortal can pour something into an empty vessel, but never into a full one, God can pour more into a full than into an empty vessel. If a man listens once he will keep listening; if he deadens his ear the first time, it will remain deadened. Again, if he hearkens to the old he will hearken to the new, but if his heart turns away he will hear no more. (See Ber. 40a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, pp. 247-248.)

marked the coming of the kingdom of heaven. In Him there appeared not only the Creator's claim upon creation, not only God's government to which the devout Jew readily submitted, but also that ineffable, ultimate bliss Israel craved. An ancient Jewish tradition sees this world as the betrothal of a king and a maiden and likens the days of the Messiah to their wedding and its delights. At the time of the engagement, the king's promises are few; at the time of the nuptials, however, he showers his bride with treasures.⁷⁵ The reign of heaven, then, is this outpouring of grace. A free and overwhelming gift, it neither obeys the principles of arithmetic nor follows the laws of nature. None can calculate, predict, earn, or force its coming.

From the first moment of her history, Israel was called to this kingdom. She was planted like a noble fig tree, invited to the king's wedding feast, given the stewardship of a fruitful vineyard, and urged by the Father to cultivate it—all these images unfold Israel's singular election as the bridal nation of God's magnanimous love. But at the appointed hour, the whole of Israel was not ready. Like stubborn children who could not be pleased, her leaders withdrew into a corner and sulked. And if this were not enough, they did everything to choke the seed of faith in the hearts of many. Not only did they ignore the call to the wedding but they mistreated the king's messengers and slew his only son. Like foolish builders, they rejected the chosen stone; mere hearers of the word, they let their lips say Yes while their lives said No. If the opposition of the leaders prevailed, the parables warned, the people too would come to grief.

Still, the parables did not announce a never-ending doom. The Palestinian farm land offered to the sower not merely stony ground, but good soil, the best soil, a soil that promised fruit a hundredfold. Alongside the willful children, there dwelt in Israel children of wisdom; close by the barren fig tree grew the rich and heavy branches of the true vine. No sooner had Jesus been given a chilly reception by Simon, the man sure of his justice, than He experienced the abounding gratitude of a woman from whom the burden of sin had been taken. Again, the publican in the Temple, representative of the poor in Israel, became the forerunner of all true disciples; his prayer expressed the true beginning of Christian perfection, and will do so till the end of time.

75. See Ex. R. 15:31; cf. *Midrash Rabbah*, III, 204.

Beyond these instances of copious growth and total response, there are in the parables intimations of a great turning to come. Is it not possible that unwavering care will make the barren fig tree bear fruit again? Is it not possible that patience will, at long last, see the children stop their quarreling and join, hand in hand, in a happy dance? Could not the idle son be suddenly gripped with shame and speed to his father's vineyard? Could not a bountiful rain change the hard ground into fertile soil? Nowhere do the parables speak of a final and irrevocable rejection of Israel; on the contrary, they imply that God's last word is unmeasured love. The parable of the two debtors, as well as that of the publican and Pharisee, makes clear that where offense abounds, grace abounds yet more (see Rom 5:20). The story of the laborers in the vineyard shows that God does all He does because He is good. Finally, the tale of the prodigal son speaks of God's everlasting compassion, anxious for the return of the beloved child, eager to lavish on him an affection even greater than before.

As the entire gospel, so do its parables proclaim the message of mercy, offering pardon to Israel and, through Israel, to all men. "Through Israel," because in her history there is mirrored the history of mankind. Her election, her failure, her suffering, and her reconciliation are image and likeness of grace, sin, pain, and forgiveness everywhere. Indeed, Israel herself is one great living parable.

Barry Ulanov

THE SONG OF SONGS: THE RHETORIC OF LOVE

RHETORIC knows special triumphs in the Song of Songs. For with whatever persuasion one approaches or leaves the Song, one must deal with it rhetorically. The speech of this greatest of biblical poems is highly artificial. It is packed with rhetorical figures. Some of them are marvelously lucid in themselves but hopelessly opaque in context. Some are of an intrinsic opacity that makes any translation of meaning questionable: One must seize these by an ironclad intuition and hold them by a conviction of the same metal. All the figures, no matter what their surface simplicity or complexity, are remote, abstruse, patently of an ambiguity of circumstance or characterization that will allow no less than two meanings and will often permit a half-dozen or more, going as far as the rhetorical training, the human experience, and the poetic graces of the reader can take him.

One cannot fight shy of rhetoric in the Song of Songs. Whether one sees the book as an unparalleled flight of mysticism or a paean of praise of sexual union, it works its way in terms of rhetoric. It calls a cheek a cheek, a breast a breast, and an eye an eye. But it also calls a cheek a piece of pomegranate, a breast a young roe, an eye a weapon that wounds, and brings up among the heavy artillery of love one hair on the neck. It does not hesitate to compare the whole neck to "the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks," a thousand small round shields hanging on it, "all the armour of valiant men" (4:4)—the literal-minded can perhaps be forgiven for seeing in this formidable piece of anatomy something less than a comely object.

But the Song of Songs is not for the literal-minded. Those who think, as they read, by the letter, must surely be outraged by the bride's description of her beloved: his head like gold, his hair like

the branches of palm trees, his eyes (as well as hers) dove eyes, his cheeks concentrated perfume, his lips lilies oozing myrrh, his hands of gold holding hyacinths, his ivory belly framed with sapphires, his legs not only of marble but cast in pillars and erect on gold foundations, his shape like a cedar of Lebanon (see 5:11-15). Those, on the other hand, who by temperament or training are always constrained to go beyond the letter are not made unhappy by such figures. They recognize here an ancient art, practiced with at least as much zeal by pagans as by Jews. If the Jews did rather better by intuition than the Greeks and the Romans did by academic system, the pagans could claim that they had systematized the study of rhetoric and had provided a vocabulary and a method with which to judge not only the products of pedantry but also those of sacred inspiration.

ANCIENT RHETORIC

ARISTOTLE's definitions—and those of Isocrates and Cicero and Quintilian—are not very far from the structure or the effect of the Song of Songs, whatever its purpose may be. Rhetoric, like dialectic, is "concerned with such things as come, more or less, within the general ken of all men and belong to no definite science."¹ It "may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." How does one persuade? By ratiocination, by which Aristotle means syllogistic reasoning, an infrequent recourse of Old Testament poets. By understanding, by which he intends "human character and goodness in their various forms"—certainly not an alien art to the writers of the Bible. By understanding the emotions, by which, Aristotle makes clear, he means the ability "to name them and describe them, to know their causes and the way in which they are excited"²—equally not an unknown discipline to the makers of the Book. The rhetorical craft is persuasive speech; its use "is to lead to decisions."³ Thus rhetoricians employ their understanding of the emotions, "those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure."⁴

This broad understanding of rhetoric was general among the

1. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, 1, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 1325.

2. *Ibid.*, I, 2, pp. 1329, 1330.

3. *Ibid.*, II, 18, p. 1408.

4. *Ibid.*, II, 1, p. 1380.

ancients. Isocrates, of the generation before Aristotle, is very clear about it. Rhetoric has for subject matter almost all that *is*. Its object is human happiness. It cannot always achieve its ambitious end—"the kind of art which can implant honesty and justice in depraved natures has never existed and does not now exist, and the people who profess that power will grow weary and cease from their vain pretensions before such an education is ever found." But a palpable improvement can be effected by rhetoric:

People can become better and worthier if they conceive an ambition to speak well, if they become possessed of the desire to be able to persuade their hearers, and, finally, if they set their hearts on seizing their advantage—I do not mean "advantage" in the sense given to that word by the empty-minded, but advantage in the true meaning of that term.⁵

The "true meaning" of "advantage" is self-interest in the highest moral sense of that term, a combination of material well-being, good reputation, and an instinct for the right action, "in a word, happiness," the sources of which are the virtues.⁶ And rhetoric is the signal means of learning and practicing the virtues.

Cicero, defending the poet Archias against expulsion from Rome as an alien, feels impelled to go beyond the poet to poetry. What he speaks for is that kind of literature which makes Greek the language "read in nearly every nation under heaven, while the vogue of Latin is confined to its own boundaries. . . ." Literature, whose "unashamed votary" he is, "exalts the nation whose high deeds it sings"; it offers "those who stake their lives to fight in honor's cause . . . a lofty incentive to peril and endeavour."⁷ Its range is all of life:

Other pursuits belong not to all times, all ages, all conditions; but this gives stimulus to our youth and diversion to our old age; this adds a charm to success, and offers a haven of consolation to failure. In the home it delights, in the world it hampers not. Through the night-watches, on all our journeying, and in our hours of country ease, it is our unfailing companion.⁸

5. Isocrates, *Antidosis*, 274–276, trans. George Norlin ("Loeb Classical Library"; London: Heinemann, 1929), II, 337.

6. See Isocrates, *On the Peace*, 26–32, trans. George Norlin ("Loeb Classical Library"; London: Heinemann, 1929), II, 25–29.

7. Cicero, *Pro Archia Poeta*, 23, trans. N. H. Watts ("Loeb Classical Library"; London: Heinemann, 1935), p. 33.

8. *Ibid.*, I6, p. 25.

The greatness of poetry is that it goes beyond any kind of system, any sort of training; and where it goes is to a divine source:

We have it on the highest and most learned authority that while other arts are matters of science and formula and technique, poetry depends solely upon an inborn faculty, is evoked by a purely mental activity, and is infused with a strange supernal inspiration. Rightly, then, did our great Ennius call poets "holy," for they seem recommended to us by the benign bestowal of God. Holy then, gentlemen, in your enlightened eyes let the name of poet be, inviolate hitherto by the most benighted of races! The very rocks of the wilderness give back a sympathetic echo to the voice; savage beasts have sometimes been charmed into stillness by song; and shall we, who are nurtured upon all that is highest, be deaf to the appeal of poetry? ⁹

Cicero makes the most direct connection between poetry and rhetoric, one which is both technical and moral: He has the right to indulge in literature because "my devotion to letters strengthens my oratorical powers, and these, such as they are, have never failed my friends in their hour of peril."¹⁰ He has learned of the glory and honor, which alone make life worth living, from literature; from literature come the incentives to right action. Unlike Plato, Cicero trusts the poet; more, he depends upon him. Nor does he always require a poetry of high moral issue and corollary tone. He speaks to extol the poet as a poet, simply because he is a poet, with the inspiration that partakes of the divine. He has seen him improvise lengths of verse on events of the day without having to commit any of it to paper. He reminds his listeners that the islands of Greece fight among each other for the honor of a dead poet's birthplace, "merely because he was a poet; and shall a living poet be repudiated by us?"¹¹

ORIGEN

THIS is the background against which the Song of Songs was read in the West by Christians trained in the rhetorical traditions of Greece and Rome. This is the way Origen, the first commentator on the Song who was not a rabbi, inevitably came to look at the text, as did

9. *Ibid.*, 18-19, p. 27.

10. *Ibid.*, 13, p. 21.

11. *Ibid.*, 19, p. 29.

St. Jerome,¹² St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, William of St. Thierry, Richard of St. Victor, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and all other men and women who plunged into the letter seeking the spirit beneath the surface. Apart from any religious allegorizing, apart from any elaborate accommodation of the text to exalted spiritual motif, there was the inexorable conviction of a work designed to persuade, "to lead to decisions." There was, as there had to be for all trained in classical rhetoric, an awareness of the play of "feelings that so change men as to affect their judgements. . . ." There was a sense of the tension of souls seeking perfection, even if all the actions that tensed the souls were bodily ones. There was, obvious for all to see, all the classical apparatus of a rhetoric and a poetry so constructed as to bring men (in Isocrates' figure) to seize their advantage, to grasp a writing (in Cicero's words) that "exalts the nation whose high deeds it sings." The pagan rhetorical tradition was basis enough to allow the saints to read the Song in depth. They did not need to rest their case—to the extent that they bothered to construct and to state a case—on the divine inspiration of Scripture.

Origen reminds his readers within a few paragraphs of the beginning of his commentary of the noble pagan precedents for both the form and content of the Song of Songs:

Among the Greeks, indeed, many of the sages, desiring to pursue the search for truth in regard to the nature of love, produced a great variety of writings in this dialogue form, the object of which was to show that the power of love is none other than that which leads the soul from earth to the lofty heights of heaven, and that the highest beatitude can

12. As early as 383, St. Jerome translated Origen's homilies on the Song of Songs into Latin and in his own interpretation followed Origen's accommodations very closely. Though in controversy he later repudiated a radical Origenism, he never disavowed the several positions he had taken up with regard to the Song. He could not. For on the basis of texts taken from the Song he had made his most eloquent statements in defense of virginity and in praise of a life of total dedication in the world: "'Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee' [4:7]. What can be fairer than a soul which is called daughter of God and seeks no outward mourning? She believes in Christ and enriched by this ambition she goes to her Spouse, having her Lord for Bridegroom." (*Letter LIV*, in St. Jerome, *Select Letters*, trans. F. A. Wright, "Loeb Classical Library"; London: Heinemann, 1933, p. 233.) "Carnal love is overcome by spiritual love: desire is quenched by desire: what is taken from the one is added to the other. Nay rather, as you lie upon your couch, say these words and repeat them continually: 'In my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loveth . . .' (3:1)." (*Letter XXII*, *ibid.*, p. 89.)

only be attained under the stimulus of love's desire. Moreover, the disputations on this subject are represented as taking place at meals, between persons whose banquet, I think, consists of words and not of meats. And others also have left us written accounts of certain arts, by which this love might be generated and augmented in the soul.¹³

It is true that some "carnal men have perverted these arts to foster vicious longings and the secrets of sinful love." Even the wise and learned among the Greeks were subject to the temptation to "interpret in a vicious and carnal sense the things the ancients wrote with good and spiritual intent. . . ." It is a temptation that remains. We must, by prayer and action, beseech God to permit us to see things whole. From the very beginning, Origen says, following Philo, there have been two kinds of men, some created "in the image and likeness of God," some "formed of the slime of the earth."¹⁴ As a reading of Scripture, this is less than felicitous, not to speak of its theological limitations, but it sets the literary tone, at least, for that dichotomy which Origen spent so much time describing and combatting, the split between the outer man, with his tendency to corruption, and the inner, who is day by day renewed.¹⁵ The terms here are St. Paul's (see 2 Cor 4:16; Rom 7:22; Eph 3:16). Elsewhere the struggle is dramatized in the conflict between Jacob and Esau, surrogates, according to Origen, for the spirit and the flesh.

For those who find in Origen's exegetical method a torturing of scriptural texts to reveal doctrinal truths, it should be added that he is nowhere as simple-minded as brief summation must make him appear. He does translate events into doctrine, and sometimes recklessly. But the underlying method is at least sound rhetorically. He recognizes that words commonly, in the most ordinary usage, have multiple val-

13. Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, trans. R. P. Lawson, in *Ancient Christian Writers* (Westminster: Newman, 1957), XXVI, 23-24; cf. Origen, *Werke in Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1925), VIII, 63. Cited hereafter as GCS.

14. Origen, *The Song of Songs*, pp. 24-25; GCS, VIII, 63, 64.

15. St. Jerome solves the problem of carnality in the Song by resort to other scriptural books as preparation for reading it. In his famous letter to Laeta on the education of her daughter Paula, he prescribes a sequence of readings starting with the Psalms and Proverbs, and then proceeding by way of Ecclesiastes, the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, the Prophets, the Heptateuch, Kings and Chronicles, to Ezra and Esther. "Then at last she may safely read the Song of Songs: if she were to read it at the beginning, she might be harmed by not perceiving that it was the song of a spiritual bridal expressed in fleshly language." (*Op. cit.*, p. 365.)

ues. No word, no matter how simple, can escape some overtone of a second or third meaning. The figurative always hovers over the literal. When St. John the Evangelist writes: "I have written to you, children, because you have known the Father; I have written you, fathers, because you have known Him who was from the beginning; I have written you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (see 1 Jn 2:12-14), he uses the designations of paternity and childhood in more than one sense. There are self-evidently outer meanings, those which conform to the age and function of the body, and inner ones, those which conform to the age, or maturity, or grace, of the soul. It is the exegete's responsibility to discover which childhood or which paternity is meant by such sayings, the physical and outer one or the spiritual and inner one. The same words are used for both, a duality which conforms to man's double nature.¹⁶

The subtlety of Origen's reading is demonstrated in his commentary on the text:

*Thy name is as oil poured out:
therefore young maidens have loved thee.
Draw me:
we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments.*
(1:2-3)

The bride tells us "that she is running towards the fragrance of the bridegroom's ointments under the compulsion of one single sense, the sense of smell alone." She does so either because she still needs to make speed, to make progress, or she does so to lead others. "What, do you think, will they do when the word of God takes possession of their hearing, their sight, their touch, and their taste as well, and offers excellences from Himself that match each single sense according to its nature and capacity," he asks. This is in time, in this life. In the next, there is other food, other nourishment, for each of the senses, "which a man still clothed in skin and flesh and bones and sinews cannot . . . take." But even now, in order to grasp what is really meant, those who hear such things must "mortify their carnal senses." They must not apply these texts to the senses of the body but rather to the "divine senses of the inner man." Yet, the divine

16. See Origen, *The Song of Songs*, pp. 26-27; *GCS*, VIII, 64-65.

senses suffer from infirmities just as the bodily ones do; interior vision can be "misled . . . by ignorance and inexperience," made "bleary as from the feebleness induced by some disease," and thus find itself unable "to discern good from evil by any means at all." The fragrance of the bridegroom offers man a "divine sense of scent," which has to be followed with the alertness modern man associates with bloodhounds. What one with well-developed interior senses does at this stage of the Song of Songs is best described as "picking up the scent of Christ."¹⁷

Origen is well aware that to one outside the faith such a reading may seem nonsense. But, he says, with an elaborate play on words, if among the faithful "there should be anyone . . . who does not accept a spiritual exegesis on these lines, but scorns and disparages it, let us try to instruct and persuade him from other passages of Scripture, in the hope that perhaps he may return to his senses."¹⁸ And so he goes to other texts that offer light to the eyes, understanding to the ears, a good odor, a sweet taste, and the word of life to be handled with the hands. The psalms and the New Testament offer an abundance of such texts, in which the senses appealed to are those of the spirit rather than the body.

WILLIAM OF ST. THIERRY

COMMENTARIES on the Song of Songs are replete with this rhetoric of the senses. William of St. Thierry, nine centuries later, makes as much of the two faces of man—the face of his soul and the face of his body—as Origen had of the two sets of senses. The bride remembers the bridegroom courting her, and asking, with a special earnestness, a fitting eagerness in a culture where women are veiled: "Show me thy face, my sister" (see 2:14). By William's time, it was an unshakable conviction that the bridegroom of the Song of Songs was, like the bridegroom of the eighteenth psalm and of Isaiah 62:5, the figure of the Christ explicitly identified by Jesus in His parable of the wise and foolish virgins (see Mt 25:5–6, 10) as well as in His rhetorical question: "Can the children of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the

17. Origen, *The Song of Songs*, pp. 76–81; GCS, VIII, 102–106.

18. Origen, *The Song of Songs*, p. 82; GCS, VIII, 106.

bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast" (Mt 9:15).¹⁹ Thus for William, the bridegroom who asks his bride to unveil is that Sun of justice who has made the light of His face and the splendor of His truth "to shine before the eyes of all." Thus "the soul of good will . . . the man, that is to say, who is Christ's brother and whose soul is called His sister" yearns to appear before Him without adornment and in His light to see light.

If she is a sinner, she shows to thee the face of her misery, and seeks for the face of thy mercy. If she is holy, she runs to meet thee with the face of her righteousness, and finds in thee a face resembling her own; for thou, O righteous Lord, lovest all righteousness. But the soul that has a harlot's brow has no desire to blush, and, fleeing from thy truth, comes face to face with thy most fearful justice. For the human soul turns to thee as many faces as she has dispositions. Yet thou, O Truth, receivest all and, though thou dost adapt thyself to all, thou art thyself unchanged. Devout humility finds in thee friendly flavor; a burning love finds sweetest fuel for its flames; the lowly heart's contrition finds in thee the righteousness it sought; the harlot's brow finds itself put to shame.²⁰

The special grace of the rhetoric of the Song of Songs is that it makes accessible, at least to those who find their ease in Origen's and William's kind of accommodation, a most firmly fleshed God-head. The face of Christ is very clear to William, and a burning magnet: "If our soul's face does not seek thy face, her face is not a human face at all, but a beast's face and a mask."

[By contrast], an enemy . . . finds in thee a fiery oven; a sinner finds the portion of his cup, fetter and flames, sulphur and stormy winds; the proud finds the power that resists the proud; the hypocrite the light of truth that he abhors. And all these, whose consciences are branded each

19. See the Introduction to William's exposition of the Song (PL 153:475) in which he explains the reasons for the name of the book: the nobility of its sentiments, the excellence of its subject, and the way it leads the reader to all the ancient canticles of the patriarchs and prophets. Specifically, says William, this structure is employed to deal with bridegroom and bride, that is, with Christ and the rational soul. Its subject is, then, the love of God, a love of which God is both the object and the subject. In the course of his introduction, William stresses the experience of God the Song describes: God condescends to enter into the soul of him who loves Him, to make His dwelling there. The remote becomes familiar. The terrifying distance between God and man is reduced to lengths that man can cover.

20. *The Meditations of William of St. Thierry*, trans. A Religious of C.S.M.V. (New York: Harper, 1954), p. 59.

with the face of his own particular evil, present in general the face of unrepentant badness.

William, dense he says with misery, lifts his face to the Lord, "the face of my sore plight and my great blindness," the face that finds its first bones and flesh in the rhetoric of the Song of Songs.²¹

The Song serves William well. When he considers the fruits of the Incarnation, the figure he uses is out of the Song; for what has the Lord been doing in His dealings with man but "sweetly ordering all things for the sake of the daughters of Jerusalem." Then he identifies the daughters: "Souls devout but weak as yet, who, since their faculties are not yet trained to contemplate those lofty mysteries, nevertheless love to be touched and moved by the lowliness wherein thou art made like unto themselves."²² William's touch is sure, his reading graceful. In a few words he accounts for the sensuality of the daughters of Jerusalem, who "love to be touched," and for their taunting manner, their "lowliness." And with the same words he describes the magic of the Song of Songs for all who find in it a language of worship, that it is Christ Himself who is there associated with the lowly and the weak, Christ Himself, the condign sign of whose human condition is the flesh He has taken on. In the Song of Songs the language of worship is the language of love, manifestly fleshly love. Nothing, for the mystic, better signifies spiritual love. Nothing better describes the mystery of hypostatic union which is instinct in the Incarnation.

Thus, in the boldest and most commanding of William of St. Thierry's glosses of this text, he transmutes the fruit of the garden of the bridegroom in the Song, and the honey and the wine, which he has eaten and drunk and of which he has invited others to partake,

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63, 64. William is fascinated by the likeness of the human face to the divine. It is not, he explains in his *Epistola ad fratres de Monte Dei*, something that man wills: The first resemblance between man and God exists whether or not man wants it, whether or not he is capable of understanding what it means. But there is a further likeness which is voluntary, in which the soul is on fire to copy in some way the sublimity of the sovereign Being by the splendor of its own virtue and to imitate, if only by perseverance, the immutability of God. This is the motivating force of William's mystical theology and the axis of his attraction to the Song of Songs, in which the imitation of God's grandeur is made uniquely explicit. (See *Un traité de la vie solitaire: Lettre aux frères du Mont-Dieu*, ed. and trans. M.-M. Davy, Paris: Vrin, 1940, pp. 285-289, especially the concluding paragraphs, 106-119.)

22. *The Meditations of William of St. Thierry*, pp. 71-72.

into the food of the Last Supper and of the Cross and of the Eucharist. The invitation in the Song reads:

*I am come into my garden, O my sister, my spouse,
I have gathered my myrrh, with my aromatical spices:
I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey,
I have drunk my wine with my milk:
Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated,
my dearly beloved.*

(5:1)

William, examining the picture of the Passion closely, seems to hear it say: "When I loved you, I loved you to the end. Let death and hell lay hold on me, that I may die their death; eat, friends, and drink abundantly, beloved, unto life eternal." The parallel is clear enough. William sees in the invitation of the Song to eat and be inebriated ("drink abundantly") the great tender of the Incarnation.

[What] happier arrangement could have been made for the man who wanted to ascend to his God . . . than that, instead of going up by steps to the altar, he should walk calmly and smoothly, over the floor of likeness, to a Man like himself, who tells him on the very threshold, "I and the Father are one," and that forthwith, being himself gathered up to God in love through the Holy Spirit, he should receive God coming to himself and making His abode with him, not spiritually only but corporeally too, in the mystery of the holy and life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.²³

FRAY LUIS DE LEÓN

NO COMMENTATORS are more aware of "the floor of likeness" than the Spaniards for whom the Song of Songs is like an article of faith. The Augustinian Fray Luis de León, for example, whose Hebrew and Chaldaic scholarship were such that he could not refrain from criticizing the accuracy of the Latin of the Vulgate Bible, was so devoted to the Song that at some danger to himself he translated it into Spanish, and added a learned commentary. The result was denunciation of the friar to the Inquisition as a man of dubious, that is, Jewish ancestry and with an even more questionable addiction to the

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

biblical readings of the rabbis. Imprisonment did not dim the fires of his love for the Song. He published an expanded version of his commentary, in Latin, and he grounded the most polished of his theological-rhetorical expositions, that on *The Names of Christ*, in the language and figures of the Song of Songs.

For Fray Luis, as for Duns Scotus before him and Suarez just after, the universe was created to make possible the Incarnation. The Song broadens and deepens our understanding of this end and purpose of all creation, as it makes vivid the physical figure of the Lord. The Song provides us with a poetic description of Christ's body (see 5:11-15, quoted above).²⁴ It makes Jesus palpable in the figure of the Good Shepherd; and Fray Luis is quick to point to all the texts that proclaim the zeal, the urgency, and the solicitude of the Shepherd's husbandry:²⁵

*Show me, O thou whom my soul lovest,
where thou feedest,
where thou liest in the midday,
Lest I begin to wander
after the flocks of thy companions.*

(1:6)

*Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one,
and come.*

*For winter is now past,
the rain is over and gone.*

*The flowers have appeared in our land,
the time of pruning is come:
the voice of the turtle is heard in our land:*

*The fig tree hath put forth her green figs:
the vines in flower yield their sweet smell.
Arise my love, my beautiful one, and come.*

(2:10-13)

*Open to me, my sister, my love,
my dove, my undefiled:*

*For my head is full of dew,
and my locks of the drops of the nights.*

(5:2)

24. See Luis de León, O.S.A., "The Face of God," *The Names of Christ*, trans. Edward J. Schuster (St. Louis: Herder, 1955), especially pp. 40-41.

25. See *ibid.*, pp. 57-70.

The latter text is to him a sign of the Shepherd's vigilance, of His rising before dawn, or refusing any sleep at all, as He seeks eternal entrance into the hearts of men. No text better describes the tender care,

the merciful ways in which God prevents a man from being lost, even when he seeks his own damnation . . . His unwillingness to admit defeat in spite of our repeated ingratitude, His compassing us about on all sides in an attempt to enter within us, His hand always upon the latch of the gate of our heart, His pleading in gentle and loving words to open to Him, as if nothing else mattered to Him. . . .²⁶

Greater even than Shepherd among the names of Christ is that of Bridegroom. For in this name is compounded several central cycles of creation. Here is the growth of the world in time from infancy until that ultimate marriage which will bring time to an end. Here are the states of nature, of the law, and of grace. Here is the history of the Church, from childhood to maturity, with the Bridegroom playing in each age the suitable role, the whole narrative chronicled in the Song of Songs:

Thus, in the first part of the Canticle, which takes us to the middle of the second chapter, God speaks of things which reflect the condition of His spouse in the state of nature and the type of love which the Bridegroom has for her. From this passage (see 2:13) to the fifth chapter the state of the law is described. The remainder of the Canticle is a symbol of Christ's love for His spouse in the period or age of grace.²⁷

With this structure before him, Fray Luis does not find it difficult to describe the Church's history in the rhetorical figures of the Song. As a young girl, the spouse uses "the privileges of her childhood and, manifesting the impatience which strong desires arouse at that age," begs for the Bridegroom's kisses (see 1:1). In the second state of life, when the spouse is in bondage in Egypt, the Bridegroom comes to deliver her. She is summoned, in Fray Luis's interpretation of the Song, in "beautiful figures," and who can deny the force of this reading of the rhetoric? The Bridegroom calls: "Arise, make haste, my love . . . winter is now past, the rain is over . . ." (2:10-11). Again the

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

call comes, and "as one who is older and more daring, she gladly answers. . . ." She goes to seek her divine Lover: "In my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loveth . . . and found him not . . . in the streets and the broad ways I will seek him . . ." (3:1-2). When she finds him, she holds him tight, promising she will not let him go until she has brought him into the "mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me" (3:4).

Fray Luis's comment on this verse is that the bride always "bore" the Bridegroom "before her" until she came into the promised land. His reading goes through each of the stages of history, each of the ages of the Church, all figured in terms of the bride's progress through the Song and revealed in the exalted language of the rhetoric of love. The exquisite lauds of the fourth chapter, in which the King-Bridegroom praises each of His bride's beauties in sequence, are part of a masterful military figure, according to Fray Luis. The Bridegroom sees His spouse spread before Him like the tribes of Israel marching through the desert by day and encamped by night. Fray Luis sees the tribes configured by each of the bride's parts—her eyes are by day the cloud that led the Israelites, by night the pillar of fire; her hair, the vanguard of the column; her teeth, the tribes of Gad and Ruben; her lips, priests and Levites; her cheeks, the tribe of Ephraim; her neck, Dan; her breasts, the sustaining figures of Moses and Aaron. In the promised land, the spouse is "a garden enclosed" (4:12). In the last epoch, that of grace, Christ comes to His bride, asking her to open to Him (see 5:2); when the people—His people, His spouse—appear reluctant, He says sadly:

*I have put off my garment,
how shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet,
how shall I defile them?*

(5:3)

Once again He departs, this time to seek another more grateful people; once again the bride searches for Him, crying out as she goes about the city. And so the narrative continues, as Fray Luis tells it, until the spouse has grown to such a stature, in her love and knowledge, that she is no longer confined to one nation; she embraces the world,

and in peace and prayer looks only to the consummation of her marriage in an eternity of joy.²⁸

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

FRAY LUIS went to prison because of his translation of the Song of Songs. In prison, St. John of the Cross drew from the Song most of the matter and much of the manner of his *Spiritual Canticle* and of one or two other poems. Thrown into a six-by-ten foot dungeon in Toledo by his Mitigated Carmelite brethren, and made to survive on a diet of dry bread and one sardine a day, St. John found, in the nearly nine months of his captivity, his sustenance in contemplation of mystical union. Like the bride in the Song, he sought his hidden Lord. Unlike the bride, he sought help not from the watchmen of the city, but from all creatures:

*O woods and thickets,
Planted by the hand of the Beloved,
O meadow of green
Enamelled with flowers,
Say if He has passed you by.*²⁹

28. See *ibid.*, pp. 212-217. A similar range, though in much briefer compass, can be found in the appearances of the Song in the liturgy. On February 11, the feast day of Notre Dame de Lourdes, the meditative lines of the Gradual are taken from chapter 2 of the Song, verses 12, 10, and 14, in that order. To celebrate the apparition of the Virgin at Lourdes, the great lines redolent of spring are chanted—the time of pruning, the voice of the turtle dove. "Make haste," the lover cries, "let thy voice sound in my ears": The Church is in the stage of youth and impatience. On July 2, the Feast of the Visitation, the Epistle echoes these sentiments, as the whole passage, so long seen as an invocation of the Incarnation (see 2:8-14), is quoted: The Church is to be delivered from bondage, redemption has come. Finally, on July 22, the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene, a masterly combination of verses from chapter 3 (2-5) and from chapter 8 (6-7) signifies the search for final deliverance from the world and the ultimate achievement of divine union. The Magdalene, who has certainly of all brides sought her love in the streets and the broad ways of the city, and who beyond all others has the right to caution the daughters of Jerusalem not to stir up love until they are quite prepared for it, speaks the language of maturity. A multiple identity, of saint, spouse, and Church, not to speak of the souls of the faithful, is the handsome achievement of this employment of Song rhetoric.

29. St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, or more precisely, "Songs between the Soul and the Spouse," Stanza IV. The translation here is as literal as possible. See, for comparison, and for the Spanish text, Roy Campbell, *The Poems of St. John of the Cross* (London: Harvill, 1951), p. 15; also *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (Westminster: Newman, 1953), II, 45, 419.

The creatures offer little help: The bridegroom had passed through their groves, "scattering a thousand graces" as he hurried by. In the many verses consecrated to the bride, and the seven in which the bridegroom speaks, the freshness of St. John's verse is unmistakable, but so too are the texture, the tone, the very images of the Song of Songs. The bride compares her beloved to the mountains, he sees her as a dove. She recalls that he loved to watch one hair on her neck flutter in the breeze. She comes into the bridegroom's garden, under his apple tree. And in her final verses, the final ones of St. John's *Canticle*, the bride echoes the rejoicing of the last lines of the scriptural Canticle, as she asks her lover to drink the new wine with her, and to bring her what her soul has so long desired, to consume her in a flame that cannot pain.

St. John sings songs both more explicit and more oblique than the great Song. He imposes upon the imagery of Scripture his own mountain, Carmel, and his own night, the dark night of the soul. He adds and subtracts at will, to construct what is still the most thorough and the most compelling of systematic mystical theologies. But the Song is always a counterpoint to his melodies: Only the psalms, among his scriptural sources, appear more often. For in the Song he finds a constant reiteration of the theology of the Gospels, of St. Paul, of the book of Wisdom, of the book of Job, and something more besides, a language of human experience—of his own experience. When in the course of his commentary on the *Spiritual Canticle* he comes to find a verbal likeness for transforming union, he reinforces again and again the bride's cry in his own poems, imploring a stream to reflect on its crystalline surface the eyes of her beloved, the eyes "which I hold outlined in my inmost parts."³⁰ St. Paul means the same thing when he says: "I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

Following this image of transformation, it can be said that St. Paul's life and his Lord's have become one through the union of love. And so it may be for any one of us in this life, though less than perfect fulfillment; "the soul may reach such a transformation of love as in the spiritual marriage, which is the highest estate that can be attained in this life. . . ." By "comparison with the perfect image of transformation in glory," this is only an outline of love. But it is happiness enough; it pleases the beloved. Hence, seeking to be held

in the bride's soul, he says: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm" (8:6). The heart, St. John explains, "signifies the soul, whereupon God is set in this life as the seal of an outline of faith," and the arm represents a strong will, "wherein it is as the seal of an outline of love."³¹ St. John has found his theology in St. Paul; but his rhetorical figure, the one he uses in his own poem, comes from the Song, which was in every way his spiritual canticle and the seal of his faith and of his love.

The most compelling rhetoric in the Song of Songs is, for St. John, that of identity, multiple identity. The many exchanges of personae in the Song of Songs are paralleled again and again in his songs, for this is the root meaning of the Song to the mystic, this its special suasion and enduring grace: What is accomplished in the intimate union of bride and bridegroom is not a mere physical coupling but a radical transformation of personality in which the one somehow becomes the other.³² The bride enters into the bridegroom, just as the bridegroom enters into her. Each goes into the other's garden. Each describes the other in images incomparably voluptuous, even in the literature of the East, where the love of the spirit so often finds translation into the language of the love of the body. And regularly, the mystics have interchanged and drawn together these images so that, for example, the breasts that are unmistakably the bride's may, in figurative language, become the bridegroom's—that is, Christ's, the Lord's—and all manner of meaning may be accommodated to them: the two Testaments or the two Laws or Israel and the Gentiles. It is all a way of saying, with considerable richness of image and subtlety of phrase, that the Incarnation effects a double movement of the spirit, the divine inhabiting the human and the human seeking a corresponding enclosure in the divine. What is sought is nothing less than mystical marriage, and, at least in the vision of the Song that is the mystics', it is found.³³

31. Commentary on Stanza XII in Second Redaction of the *Spiritual Canticle*. See *The Complete Works*, II, 238.

32. See, for example, Richard of Saint-Victor, *Benjamin Major*, V, 14 (PL 196:186), for the gloss on Song 8:5 ("Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?"). See also Richard's *Commentary on the Canticles* (PL 196:406–523), especially chaps. 26, 27, 32, 33, and 35.

33. For a pellucid explanation of the compelling power of the rhetoric of marriage as it is employed in the Song of Songs, see St. Bonaventure, *Vitis Mystica* in

St. John makes this aim of the mystics, this holy aim, this brazen one, into beguiling poetry. The eyes the bride seeks on the surface of the stream are at once the bridegroom's and her own: She yearns for eyes "I hold outlined in my inmost parts." She has drunk "in the cellar" of her beloved, where he "gave" her "his breast" and instructed her in "a science most delectable." The wisdom she gathered was such that in the world's eyes she could only be counted lost. The relationship—the exchange of persons—removed her entirely from the ways of the world; only in a geography of the spirit could she be found: "From now on I am neither seen nor found . . . wandering love-stricken, I lost my way and was found."³⁴

The paradoxes of this relationship can only be expressed in an arcane rhetoric by a rhetorician who does not fear the utmost deviousness, the most deliberate distortion of the natural world. The bridegroom flees the bride, in the opening verse of St. John's *Canticle*, like a stag. In conventional terms, the poet would describe the fleeing animal as wounded during the hunt, but in this poem it is the stag that wounds its pursuer, ultimately to be wounded itself—"in solitude"! St. John makes clear that the most lasting wounds are always received in solitude, for that is the only way divine love wounds and, in this special manner of speaking, is itself wounded. St. John's gloss on the wounding of the bridegroom, "who likewise in solitude was wounded by love," makes this clear by showing in the delicate crisscrossing of sensuality and spirituality where it is and how it is that God and man can consummate their love for each other.

"Who likewise in solitude was wounded by love." That is to say, by the love of the bride. For not only does the Spouse greatly love the solitude of the soul, but He is most deeply wounded with love for her, because she has desired to remain alone, and far from all things, inasmuch as

Opera Omnia (Quarracchi, 1900), VIII, 163-165; trans. as *The Mystical Vine* by a Friar of the Society of St. Francis (London: Mowbray, 1955), pp. 18-22. For virtuoso variations on the theme of the wedding garment, see the twelfth-century Cistercian abbot, St. Aelred of Rielvaux, *De Vita Eremitica*, wrongly ascribed to St. Augustine in PL 32:1462-1463; trans. as *A Letter to His Sister*, by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (London: Mowbray, 1957), pp. 24-26.

34. Second Redaction of the *Spiritual Canticle*, Stanzas XXVI, XXVII, XXIX. See *The Complete Works*, II, 182-183, 312-324, 329-333.

she has been wounded with love for Him. And thus He would not leave her alone; but rather, wounded by her through the solitude wherein for His sake she lives, and, seeing that she is content with naught else, He alone guides her to Himself, draws her to Himself and absorbs her in Himself; which He would not do in her had He not found her in spiritual solitude.³⁵

The astonishing fact is that such a love can be consummated. St. John cannot quite reduce to rational explication either the fact or his astonishment over it. But he never loses control. He is simply confined to explaining that "the lower and sensual part of the soul is now so purified and in some manner [so] spiritualized in this estate of the spiritual marriage that she, together with her sensual faculties and natural forces, is recollected." In their own way the senses participate in the "spiritual grandeurs" implanted in the soul by God, as the psalmist signifies when he says: "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God" (83:3).³⁶

In explaining this, St. John comes as close as anyone ever has to explaining what it is that the mystic finds in the Song, which is to say, why it is that voluptuous language is so suitable for expressing an experience that seems beyond all others to transcend carnal delights. The last line of St. John's poem echoes the fearful Shulamite at the end of chapter 6 of the Song:

*I went down into the garden . . .
to look if the vineyard had flourished . . .
I knew not: my soul troubled me
for the chariots of Aminadab.*

(6:10-11)

St. John transforms the chariots, engines of the devil in the Song, into the cavalry of the senses: "And the cavalry came down at the sight of the waters." The cavalry stands for "the faculties of the sensual part, both interior and exterior," he explains, faculties which "carry within them the phantasms and figures of their objects." The waters are entirely spiritual; they are the grandeurs which God communicates to the soul. The cavalry does not drink the waters, however; it merely springs forward, "comes down," at the sight of them. Our sensuality is not equipped "to taste essentially and properly of

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-358.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 383.

spiritual blessings, either in this life or even in the next."³⁷ But our senses can be drawn into a state of recollection; they can be absorbed into a contemplation of the soul as it drinks the waters. The senses, it is clear now, are not rejected in the mystical life, but are on the contrary refreshed and delighted.

In the rhetoric of love, then, we have come full circle. We have not only used the vocabulary of the senses to communicate the operations of the spirit, but in the most exalted state of that communication, we have given particular attention, not to the spirit but to the place of the senses alongside it. St. John has paid a stirring tribute to human nature in his *Spiritual Canticle* and given us a handsome reminder of the analogy to the Incarnation which every human being offers in his own hypostatic union of body and soul.

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

AMONG the singers of the Song the most radiant are those who can effortlessly identify themselves with the bride. Sts. Teresa of Avila, Jeanne Françoise de Chantal, Catherine of Siena, and Thérèse of Lisieux found the rhetoric of espousal natural and welcomed every opportunity to use it. Though in each of these brides the flesh may be mortified, the language of the senses drawn from the Song of Songs is, as with St. John of the Cross, the appropriate one with which to express the passionate love of God.

In major legend and minor, the mystical marriage of St. Catherine of Siena is celebrated. Like St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and St. Thérèse after her, she consecrated herself to Christ at a very early age, seven to be exact. In her mid-twenties, she was rewarded with espousal for returning to nurse a fellow Beguine of St. Dominic who was twice repugnant to her, once for the ugly running sore on her breast and once for the revilement of her tongue. Espousal and its consolations were the greatest of her joys, for they offered constant assurance of the acceptance of her dedicated love. Her confessor and biographer, Fra Raimondo of Capua, tells us again and again how little she cared for anything, and least of all for her body, as long as she could give "free service to her eternal Spouse."³⁸

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 383-384.

38. *The Little Flowers of St. Catherine of Siena*, ed. Innocenzo Taurisano, O.P., trans. Charlotte Dease (London: Harding and More, 1929), p. 49.

One of her ardent followers, Fra Tommaso Caffarini of Siena, narrates the details of the "admirable espousal" with compendiousness, imitating in his brief but jubilant chapters the Song itself. When, he explains, Catherine prayed for an increase of faith, the answer given her was the promise: "I will espouse myself to thee in perfect faith," a promise soon enough fulfilled. Praying alone in her cell, she was drawn to her Lord by His mother, who begged her "divine Son . . . according to His promise to deign to espouse" Catherine "in perfect faith." This, we are told, He did, bringing to her "a magnificent ring composed of four pearls and one diamond," and assuring her that she could "henceforth . . . do without hesitation all things my providence places in thy hands."³⁹ She followed the terms of that espousal, the terms of the Son, with a corresponding assurance. Her advice to Fra Raimondo was in itself a small canticle:

I wish that you hide yourself in the open side of the Son of God, which is an open shop full of perfumes, so much so that sin is perfumed. There the sweet Spouse reposes in a bed of fire and blood. There is seen and made manifest the secret of the Son of God. O distilled fountain which inebriates and satisfies all loving desire, and rejoices and illuminates all intelligence and fills the tired memory so that it retains nothing and understands nothing and loves nothing but the sweet and good Jesus. Blood and fire, inestimable blood! Therefore my soul would rejoice to see you thus plunged into it. I desire that you should do as he who draws water with a bucket and then pours it over something else. Pour, therefore, this water of holy desire over the heads of your brothers who are our members, bound as we are together in the body of the sweet Spouse.⁴⁰

It is advice she follows very closely herself. She tells Brother Raimondo in the same letter of going to see one Toldo of Perugia, sentenced to be executed for having spoken out against the ruling house of Siena, and bringing him such consolation and ease that he went easily to confession and then pleaded with her to stay with him at the time of execution, knowing almost before he asked that she would consent. She did, enacting in the condemned man's life the role of the bride with a daring that one could not easily expect of any other woman, religious or lay. Toldo's only fear was that at the very end he might lose courage: "But God tricked his fear by creating in

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

him a desire of God so loving and so inflamed that he could no longer live without Him." She reports: "I held his head against my breast; I felt then a great joy and it seemed to me I breathed the odor of his blood mixed with mine, that I so longed to pour out for the love of my sweet Spouse Jesus." When she felt Toldo become frightened once again she counseled: "Courage, my sweet brother, because soon we shall enter into the marriage feast." He then offered up his earthly life with every expectancy of the everlasting life that Catherine had held out to him and with the special hope that he would find her waiting for him in the life to come. "Bending over him I reminded him of the blood of the Lamb. His lips pronounced the words Jesus and Catherine, and as he said them I received his head in my hands."⁴¹

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

TERESA of Avila's experiences with the Song were not so challenging as Catherine's, but in writing about its texts she took on a role that even her confessor thought unfitting for her or for any other woman. He ordered her to burn her little book of commentary on the Song of Songs, *Conceptions of the Love of God*, which in obedience she promptly did. Fortunately, the Duchess of Alba preserved an excellent copy of Teresa's gloss which she had received in the convent at Alba, and there was at least one other version extant when Father Gracian, some years after her death, came to publish a collected edition of St. Teresa's works. He may have needed some courage to print the *Conceptions*. Fray Luis de León, whose misadventures with the Song had ended in jail, had left it out of his edition of Teresa's works, some years before. It hardly needs to be added that nothing in Teresa's commentary justifies any fear.

St. Teresa's *Conceptions* is a small work and an articulate one, filled with both the tenderness and the hard tensile strength which invariably and inseparably identify her love of God. Its special message is best summed up in the words of one of her *Exclamations of the Soul to God*, where she celebrates the joy of suffering for, and in, the love of God: "Happy are they who find themselves laden with the strong fetters and chains of the gifts of God's mercy, so that

41. *Ibid.* pp. 112-114.

they are unable to gain the power to set themselves free." To make this point stick she transmutes some strong words from the Song—"love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell" (8:6)—into stronger ones—"strong as death is love and hard as hell." In a great burst of rhetoric which she garlands around her version of these lines she says: "Oh, that one might die at the hands of love and be cast into this divine hell, whence there is no hope of escape, or rather, no fear of finding oneself cast forth from it!" Her love knows no bounds, except those of life. In a variation on her familiar plaint, "I die because I do not die," she cries again: "O life, that art the enemy of my welfare, would that one were permitted to end thee." This life is tolerable only because in it she can express her love: "I endure thee because God endures thee; I sustain thee because thou art His."⁴²

St. Teresa's love of God has about it a kind of holy violence. In her *Conceptions*, as in most of the texts she wrote for her sisters in Carmel, she attempts to stir in others the tumult she felt in herself: "God preserve you from many kinds of peace experienced by worldly people! God forbid that you should ever know these, for they bring perpetual war!" The peace of the world is a stewing in one's own juices, a relaxing into the stupor of self-contentment, an acceptance if not of vices then of faults, a willingness to indulge in deviations from the rules that bind religious. Temptations are all right. Inner disturbances may even be helpful, for they may make us watchful, in the love and fear of God, and lead us to the best of employments, "making a dwelling-place for our Spouse within the soul," so that in time it will be possible "to ask Him for the kiss of His mouth." These are strong words, she knows. They would shock a sinner, she is certain, and, "if taken literally, would strike fear into anyone who was in a normal state of mind." But in those drawn out of themselves by the most sublime of loves, there need be no fear; the Lord will forgive the use of such words and "even of more words of the kind, notwithstanding their presumption." Those who love this way can no

42. *Exclamations of the Soul to God*, XVII, in *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1946), II, 419. For a more conventional but no less compelling reading of Song 8:6, see Hugh of St. Victor, *De Laude Caritatis* (PL 176:969-976); trans. A Religious of C.S.M.V. as "In Praise of Charity," in *The Divine Love* (London: Mowbray, 1956), pp. 11-12.

longer make discretion their central standard of behavior. If you know "by the effects" that God has heard your prayers to be kissed "with a kiss of His mouth . . . you need stop at nothing: you can forget yourselves altogether in order to please your gentlest Spouse."⁴³

The effects of which Teresa talks are those of "special friendship" with "His Majesty." They are the effects of a pervasive sweetness and tranquillity, a peace brought to all the faculties of the soul by the prayer of quiet. The words that engender these reflections are those that follow the petition to be kissed by the Bridegroom: "Thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments" (1:1-2). And this too is a petition, not simply a cry of joyous admiration. For if the Bridegroom yields to the bride, in that curious inversion of physical roles which is acceptable only when the Lord plays the part of a mother, the result will be a "heavenly inebriation" here on earth.

When first in that state of inebriation, she felt it impossible to rise higher; but now that she finds herself in a loftier state, and wholly absorbed in God's indescribable greatness, she realizes how she has been nourished and makes this subtle comparison, saying: "Thy breasts are better than wine." For, just as a child has no idea how it grows, or how it takes its nourishment (since often, without any act or movement of its own, the milk is put into its mouth), so here the soul of itself knows nothing, and does nothing and neither knows nor is capable of understanding how or whence this exceeding great blessing has come to it. But it knows that it is the greatest blessing that can be enjoyed in life, even if all the delights and pleasures of the world should be put together and compared with it. It finds that it has been nourished and benefited, yet cannot understand how it can have deserved this. It has been instructed in great truths without having seen the Master who teaches it. It has been strengthened in the virtues and comforted by Him who so well knows how to comfort it and has also the power to do so. With what to compare this it knows not, save to the caress of a mother who so dearly loves her child and feeds and caresses it.⁴⁴

43. *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, II, 364, 367, 363-364, 378.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 384. St. John of the Cross is very fond of this rhetorical figure. He uses it frequently in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, the *Dark Night of the Soul*, and the *Spiritual Canticle*. See, for example, the opening of *Dark Night of the Soul* in *The Complete Works*, I, 330: "It must be known, then, that the soul, after it has been definitely converted to the service of God, is, as a rule, spiritually nurtured and caressed by God, even as is the tender child by its loving mother, who warms it with the heat of her bosom and nurtures it with sweet milk."

ST. JEANNE DE CHANTAL AND ST. THERESE
OF LISIEUX

ST. JEANNE DE CHANTAL'S spirituality is no different in purpose from St. Teresa's. What Mother Teresa wanted to accomplish with her daughters in the Carmel of the reformed or discalced observance, the foundress of the Visitation nuns wanted to do with her sisters in religion. But the tone of the French nun is softer than that of the Spaniard. St. Jeanne draws from the texts of bride and bridegroom a more tender song, suitable not only to the passive state but also to the passive approach to it, which her temperament found natural. The exclamation points are fewer here, the rhetoric more directed to the intellect than to the will. The logic is, as she sees it, inescapable, its conclusions irrefutable. She argues like a bride who has met her bridegroom in a school of law, a fitting role for the great good friend of St. Francis de Sales.

The special *suasio nubendi* she offers her nuns is based on the Song of Songs. The apartments of the king in the Song, his "secret chamber," she identifies as "the religious state." Her argument is firm, well-founded, and, as one expects, thoroughly convincing to those listening:

You see, my daughters, when a king has had a secret chamber built in an ancient castle, this chamber is his delight and may be looked upon as his favorite abode. He embellishes it, he straightway fills it with delicate ornaments, scents and perfumes; he makes it the depository of his most precious possessions. To be invited to it is a mark of his special favor for in it he holds secret converse with his guest, they two, alone with each other; and there he entertains his dear spouse, the queen.⁴⁵

Almost every appeal of St. Jeanne to her daughters is couched in terms of the Song. She asks them to strip themselves of everything except love of the King, like the spouse in the Song who cries out: "My beloved is mine and I am all his." All affection must be concentrated in Him; any other attachment is, whatever it may appear to

45. St. Jeanne Françoise Frémyot de Chantal, *Entretien*, 38, in *Oeuvres*, II, trans. in *The Spiritual Life, A Summary of the Instructions on the Virtues and on Prayer Given by St. Jane Frances Frémyot de Chantal*, compiled by the Sisters of the Visitation, Harrow-on-the-Hill (St. Louis: Herder, 1928), pp. 55-56.

be, nothing more than dross and mire.⁴⁶ Her instructions on prayer rest on the same rhetorical pedestal. She echoes the bride's fervent "Draw me" of the Song; she reminds her listeners of the Bridegroom's "longing to come back to our souls," when He says: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is full of dew, and my locks of the drops of the nights" (5:2), a passage which she, in common with many others, reads in terms of the Passion. The dew represents the sufferings and the sweat on the cross; soon it "will be converted into pearls of consolation." The voice of the turtle is "a devout soul very agreeable" to the Sacred Spouse at the time "when she presents herself before Him and meditates in order within herself to feed the holy love of Him."⁴⁷

Of each of the words of the Song that St. Jeanne takes up she makes another codicil in the monumental deposition of love that is her system of prayer. Perhaps "system" is not the word. "Witness" would be better. For what she seeks to do is to testify to the fullness of the love of God and its all-encompassing reach through life and death. Thus the bride in the Song becomes anybody, everybody, "our neighbor created to the image and likeness of God. . . . Look, see this creature, how she resembles her Creator." The passionate language of the Song is fitting for her too:

Should we not embrace her, caress and be full of affection for her, call down upon her a thousand blessings? But why all this. For the love of her? Ah, not for the love of her, because we know not if she be in herself worthy of love or hatred. Then why? Oh, for the love of God who has created her to His own image and thereby renders her capable of participating in His goodness, His grace and glory. For love of God, I say, by whom she is, to whom she is, through whom she is, in whom she is and for whom she is; to whom she has a resemblance in a unique manner. This is why divine love so often not only commands the love of our neighbor but creates that love and diffuses it in the human heart, because of this resemblance, and he in whom this love is diffused would willingly die to save his neighbor from perishing. True zeal has a glowing ardor but it is constant, firm, sweet, laborious, equally lovable and indefatigable. All otherwise is false zeal, it is turbulent, disordered, insolent, proud, short-lived, angry, equally impetuous and inconstant.⁴⁸

46. See *Exhortation*, 7, in *The Spiritual Life*, p. 62. The verse from the Song is St. Jeanne's variation on 6:2: "I to my beloved, and my beloved to me. . . ."

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-223.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.

The substance of St. Thérèse's reading of the Song is the same. For her, the great injunction is: "Draw me, we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments." No further words are necessary; nor need anything be said about one's neighbors, about those one loves, for, exclaims St. Thérèse of Lisieux: "Lord, I know that when a soul is captivated by the intoxicating fragrance of thy sweetness, it does not run alone: all those it loves are drawn along with it . . . without special force or effort. It is a natural result of the soul's attraction to you." In one of her most felicitous conversions of Scripture to the purposes of her own spirituality, St. Thérèse compares the magnetic pull of love on the heart to iron and fire. She deepens her rhetoric by imagining both as reasonable beings, so that the iron might say to the fire: "Draw me" and "thus establish its desire to be so united to the fire that it might be filled with it and saturated with burning substance so that the two would become one." This is her prayer. The more she feels the fire of love in her heart, the more she will cry out: "Draw me"—she says—"poor little piece of useless iron, if I be withdrawn from the divine fire." And the more she cries, the more will those she loves "run quickly in the fragrance of the Beloved; for a soul on fire with this love cannot stay inactive."⁴⁹

ST. BERNARD

NO SOUL showed itself more on fire with the love of God than St. Bernard of Clairvaux. For some nineteen years, from 1135 until his death in 1153, he preached on the Song of Songs to his monks at Clairvaux. "Draw me," the bride directed, and he drew eighty-six sermons from her blessed text, more than 170,000 words—what amounts in modern terms to a pair of substantial volumes—and yet he never got beyond the fourth verse of the third chapter. Even more remarkable, the fires of rhetoric did not dim in nearly two decades of commenting, glossing, preaching, teaching, teasing the text for exalted meaning, of searching the most rarefied of words for the most trustworthy of rubrics for the life of the spirit. The fires were as bright, as fervent, as hot at the end as at the beginning. St. Bernard sets out to feed his brothers "solid food," commensurate with their station in life; not the milk that would be acceptable for those who live in the world, but bread,

49. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Autobiography*, chaps. 39 and 40. (Translation my own.)

the "exceedingly good and palatable" bread of the Song.⁵⁰ He ends—though he does not end, for he never finishes his exposition—with more of the same, with solid food, with consoling food. In his eighty-third sermon he sums up the three preceding discourses on the relationship of the Word and the soul, a relationship more or less of a mold and the wax that bears its stamp. What can be gleaned from the cycle of sermons is not a technical lesson in theology; it is a parable of hope that is the soul's great consoling rapture:

Now it may be asked, what is the use of all this labor? Let me tell you. We have learned from this discussion that every human soul, no matter how burdened with sins, no matter how entangled in vices, no matter how enslaved to the enticements of pleasure, though she be held captive in exile, imprisoned in the flesh, clinging to the mire, sunk in the slime, yoked to the body, tortured with cares, distraught with solitudes, terrified with fears, afflicted with sorrows, deceived and seduced by errors, worried with anxieties, disquieted with suspicions; though she be, lastly, a stranger in the land of her enemies, and, in the words of the Prophet Baruch, "defiled with the dead" and "counted with them that go down into hell"; yes, I say, though the soul should be in such a state of despair and damnation, yet we have learned from the preceding discourses how she can still discover in herself something which is not only capable of establishing her in the hope of pardon and in the confidence of mercy, but also of animating her with courage to aspire even to the nuptials of the Word, to enter boldly into an alliance of friendship with God, and to begin fearlessly to draw the sweet yoke of love with Him who is Lord of the angels. For what may she not safely presume in the case of One with whose image she beholds herself adorned, and by whose likeness she perceives herself ennobled? What, I ask, has she to fear from His Majesty?⁵¹

St. Bernard lights up many texts. Alongside bounding accommodations that leap far from the narrative, he makes sharp observations about the nature of the spiritual life; though these are intended for his monks at Clairvaux, they are almost always equally apposite for those of his brothers in the world who prefer solid food to liquid, bread to milk. One of the great exegetical leaps is that

50. See *St. Bernard's Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, trans. A Priest of Mount Melleray (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1920), I, 1; *S. Bernardi Opera, Sermones Super Cantica Canticorum* (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957), I, 3.

51. *Sermons on the Canticle*, II, 485-486; *S. Bernardi Opera*, II, 298-299.

performed on the text: "I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem" (1:4). St. Bernard shows how the daughters' ill-willed taunts and rebukes meet with the bride's patience and good will, "malediction with benediction." He explains that one can be black, as St. Paul was, "discolored and deformed . . . a man of diminutive stature, afflicted 'in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in many more labors, in stripes above measure, in deaths often'. . . the 'offscouring of all,' " and yet be a "truly most beautiful soul."⁵²

One of the most far-reaching of St. Bernard's psychological perceptions is in a cycle of five sermons on the text: "If thou know not thyself, O fairest among women, go forth and follow after the steps of the flocks, and feed thy kids beside the tents of the shepherds" (1:7). His reading of these apparently harsh words of the bridegroom is dialectical: Either she knows herself, with the bridegroom's help, capable of "sweet and familiar contemplation of things celestial, spiritual, and divine" or she must apply herself "to the task of satisfying and pleasing the senses of the flesh," that is, the kids of the flock, who because of their sins "on the Last Day are to stand on the Judge's left." The young sheep are emblematic too of "the wandering and wayward sensitive faculties, by which, as through windows, sin and death found entrance to the soul."⁵³ Knowledge of self is equated by St. Bernard with knowledge of God, for in the close inquiry of the kind the king commands in the Song, one discovers who one is and who God is, a twofold knowledge that offers many balms. It preserves sanity. It precludes despair. It induces proportion: "We are now in no danger of being 'puffed up' by whatever learning we may add to it."⁵⁴

One can read St. Bernard's sermons as a triumph of intuitive

52. *Sermons on the Canticle*, I, 270, 274; *S. Bernardi Opera*, I, 163, 165-166. Compare this reading with St. Jerome, *op. cit.*, p. 55, and Origen, *The Song of Songs*, pp. 91-113 (GCS, VIII, 113-130), where in spite of a difference in text—*Nigra sum et formosa* instead of *Nigra sum sed formosa*, "I am black and beautiful" rather than "I am black but beautiful"—the interpretation is much the same as St. Bernard's. But where St. Bernard creates a psychological drama of high tension, St. Jerome is content with a commonplace about man's fallen nature. Origen, on the other hand, spends his time looking feverishly to find in Scripture types that provide an honorable lineage for the bride, whom he sees as an Ethiopian. In substance, Origen says what St. Bernard says, but in this passage at least he lacks almost entirely the rhetorical strength of St. Bernard.

53. *Sermons on the Canticle*, I, 417; *S. Bernardi Opera*, I, 249-250.

54. *Sermons on the Canticle*, I, 440; *S. Bernardi Opera*, II, 11.

exegesis, each of his spontaneous insights bulwarked by a massive edifice of scriptural texts. One can read them, as surely some of the time one must, as a guide to the life of the spirit by a master of that way of passing one's days. But inevitably one must come in them to that translation of divine love into the language of the human which is the abiding concern of all those who have been granted the mystical graces. That is why they all turn to the Song of Songs. Its texts permit such rapturous exclamations as this one of St. Bernard's, just seven sermons before the last of those the Song inspired in him:

"Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth?" [3:4]. O love, so precipitate, so violent, so ardent, so impetuous, suffering the mind to entertain no thought but of thyself, spurning everything, despising everything which is not thyself, content with thyself alone! Thou disturbest all order, disregardest all usage, ignorest all measure. Thou dost triumph over in thyself and reduce to captivity whatever appears to belong to fittingness, to reason, to decorum, to prudence or counsel. Thus every thought which this spouse thinks and every word which she utters savors of thee, and sounds of thee and of nothing but thee, so completely hast thou monopolized both her heart and her tongue.⁵⁵

Do the great lovers of God who turn to the Song of Songs do so merely to use the rhetoric of love? No, they are drawn to it because it is the very source of that rhetoric. Without it, they would be mute.

55. *Sermons on the Canticle*, II, 435; *S. Bernardi Opera*, II, 272. The exultant flow of words proceeds from an intoxication of which all the rhetoricians of love who cull their rhetoric from the Song make mention. See, for example, Richard of Saint-Victor, *De Tribus Processionibus*, in *Sermons et Opusculs Spirituels Inédits*, ed. Jean Chatillon and William-Joseph Tulloch (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951), I, 104-106: "After the inebriation that yields true sweetness come the ardor and the order of interior love: 'The king,' says the Song, 'brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me' [2:4]. Only true spiritual sweetness can appease the insatiable hunger and thirst of the human heart."

LOVE OF GOD IN THE TALMUD

WHEN the Emperor Hadrian decreed that the Jews were no longer to study Torah, the illustrious Rabbi Akiba fearlessly continued to gather his disciples about himself, expounding to them the intricacies of the Law. Jailed and condemned to death about the year 132 A.D., he was led to execution at an hour when the *Shema'*, Israel's solemn profession of faith in Yahweh, was to be recited.¹ His disciples expressed astonishment that even in this extremity their master remained faithful to his duty. "All my days," he said, "I have been troubled by the words 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with . . . all thy soul,' which I understand to mean 'even if He takes your soul.' I said to myself: 'When shall I ever have the opportunity of fulfilling such a commandment?' Now that I have it, shall I not seize it?"²

1. The *Shema'*, so called from its opening word, "Hear," is taken from Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:37-41, to which is appended a liturgical conclusion. A literal interpretation of the injunctions contained in these verses resulted in the wearing of *tefillin* or leather strips ("You shall bind them at your wrist as a sign, and they shall be as pendants between your eyes"), and *zizit* or fringes on the prayer shawl ("Tell them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put on the fringe of each corner a blue thread"). The *Shema'* also enjoins the *mezuzah*, a small capsule attached to the doorpost, with the sacred words written on a parchment within ("You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates"). For the complete text of this prayer, see *Daily Prayer Book*, trans. Philip Birnbaum (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1949), pp. 76-82.

2. Ber. 61b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 386. All talmudic quotations in this essay are based on *The Babylonian Talmud*, edited by Isidore Epstein (London: Soncino, 1935-48). In order to make it easier for the reader to grasp the rabbinic idiom, so distinct in language and logic, I do not always reproduce the text verbatim; at times I shorten it, at others I paraphrase it.

An explanation may be helpful of my use of the term "Torah." Some writers, the translators of the Babylonian Talmud among them, always speak of "the Torah," while others make a distinction between "the Torah," the five books of Moses, and "Torah," the whole body of Law built on them by the rabbis, in other words, the Pentateuch and "the tradition of the ancients" (Mt 15:2) or biblical and talmudic law. Unless I quote, I make this distinction my own.

This episode discloses several characteristics of Jewish piety: a definite preoccupation with the exact fulfillment of God's will as the teachers of old saw it revealed in the Torah; a tenacity in the face of opposition; above all, a single-minded adherence to the *Shema'*, the people's ancient declaration of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Committed to memory by generations of Jewish children; recited evening and morning; strapped to the wrist with leather thongs; suspended like a jewel between the eyes; attached to the doorpost of every dwelling, the two hundred and forty-five words of this prayer have been assimilated by Israel with such intensity and ardor that it is not too much to say they have been burned into her heart. Although Rabbi Akiba died with the word *'ehad*, "One," on his lips—as pious Jews were wont to do he prolonged that word, thus reciting only the first verse of the *Shema'*: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One"—his soul no doubt embraced the commandment of total love that follows almost immediately: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." To so great a love the act of faith, by its inner dynamism, must lead, and it was this love the dying Rabbi Akiba hoped to achieve.

The inner sources of a man's piety are not easy to determine; much of what affects him most deeply is left implicit, unexpressed. It is no less true of nations that their compelling motives, their spiritual outlook, their peculiar religious genius resist complete analysis or penetration. From a study of their prayers or their writings, religious and profane, we can arrive at some conclusions, but we must never ignore what remains unsaid. In the life of Israel, as in the life of Rabbi Akiba, the *Shema'*, with its unrelenting daily imperative: "You shall love the Lord . . ." is just such a hidden stream. Within the legalistic framework of the Talmud, there are moments when the cold letters of the text glow with an inner warmth that is more truly the mark of the mystic and the theologian than that of the jurist. Like Ruth in the field of Boaz, an alert reader can follow after the teachers of Israel and glean a goodly sheaf of love from occasional expressions, casual comments or anecdotes, dropped by these masters in the course of their laborious and sometimes arid discussions.³

3. Two recent studies, one Catholic, the other Jewish, have been of invaluable help in assembling the material for this article: Ceslaus Spicq, O.P., *Agapè, Prolégomènes à une étude de théologie néo-testamentaire* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1955), pp. 143-163; Georges Vajda, *L'amour de Dieu dans la théologie juive du moyen âge* (Paris: Vrin, 1957), pp. 34-67.

From the outset, the reader must be mindful that the Talmud is neither a systematic treatise with a carefully planned chapter on charity nor a devotional work intended to edify or to inspire. Rather is it a series of involved rabbinical discussions on the application of the legal principles of Judaism. To the modern reader, the talmudic line of thought is often far from clear, the interpretations given are not only of uneven authority but so often in conflict that it seems a hopeless task to set this mass of opinions in order. As Father Ceslaus Spicq, O.P., remarks:

For every well-attested idea [in rabbinical literature], there can always be found some assertion to the contrary. If we wish to know, for instance, whether the rabbis hold in higher esteem the love of God or the fear of God, whether they extend the duty of charity to enemies or restrict it to Israel, we must remember that the most opposed theses have had their defenders, and that practice was not uniform.⁴

The problem of presenting the talmudic teaching on love is thus a delicate one, and I hope I have not distorted the sense of the texts I am going to quote nor forced them into alien modes of thought. My aim is not to judge, but to present.

I

A PROFOUND saying, attributed to Rabbi Akiba, sees God's love for man as love for His image: "Beloved is man in that he was created in the image of God."⁵ No philosophical deduction, Rabbi Akiba's concept is based on the word of God; if His making us in His image is proof of His love, then His taking us into His confidence is token of even greater love: "Out of superabundant love was it made known to man that he had been created in God's image."⁶

4. Spicq, *op. cit.*, p. 144. On the same note of caution, Spicq remarks: "The documents at our disposal were written considerably later than the time of Christ; while they record much earlier traditions, one can never be certain that they have preserved these traditions in all their purity. This reservation is particularly pertinent to a study of the notion of *'ahabab*, love, when one keeps in mind the progressive emphasis given to the theology of charity by the rabbis at the beginning of the Christian era." (*Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.) Yet, except for an occasional reference to the New Testament, I do not attempt to offer a critical appraisal of the possible interdependence of Christian and rabbinical teachings on the various aspects of love. It is enough to remember Father Spicq's warning about the respective ages of the two traditions.

5. Ab. 3:14; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 37.

6. *Ibid.*

Not words alone, events as well, disclosed this mystery to man: It was in the course of history, the history of the chosen people, that God progressively revealed His true Self. No wonder, then, that the rabbis, when thinking of the love God bears for mankind, find it reflected in His successive interventions on behalf of the people He set aside for Himself. "Beloved are Israel in that they were called children of the All-present. It was a mark of superabundant love that it was made known to them that they were called children of the All-present."⁷ God's love for Israel, then, is not so much a reasoned conclusion as a spiritual conviction, an observation of faith.

So compelling and all-absorbing is Israel's relationship with her Lord that the rabbis show little interest in defining God's attitude to mankind in general. Love means preference, means election, and clearly Israel has been preferred—elected into love. Indeed, the rabbis hold that the universe was created for Israel's sake. God is made to say, speaking, strangely enough, in the language of the Roman army:

My daughter, twelve constellations were created by me in the firmament, and for each constellation I created thirty hosts, and for each host, thirty legions, and for each legion, thirty cohorts, and for each cohort, thirty maniples, and for each maniple, thirty camps, and to each camp I have attached three hundred and sixty-five thousands of myriads of stars, corresponding to the days of the solar year, and all of them I have created only for your sake. . . . I can no more forget you than a mother can forget her suckling child.⁸

For the rabbis, Israel is the bride of Yahweh, and the Song of Songs the nuptial hymn that celebrates her union with the Lord. Applying its words to herself, she says to her Bridegroom: "O God, set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm (Cant 8:6)." To this the rabbis hear Him reply: "Not upon my heart, or upon my arm, will I place you, for there the memory of you will not always be before me; 'I have graven you upon the very palms of my hands' (Is 49:16), where you are always in my sight."⁹

7. *Ibid.*

8. Ber. 32b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 201.

9. Ta'an. 4a; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 11. According to Rabbi Akiba, the Song of Songs is the holiest of all the books of the Old Testament: "The whole world is not as worthy as the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel. For all the writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies." (Yad. 3:5; cf. *B. Talmud, Yadayim*, p. 559.)

In other texts, it is for the sake of the beloved patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the people of Israel are called the children of God. Abraham, the first of proselytes,¹⁰ was tried by God many times and never faltered; this was "to make known how great was the love of Abraham our father."¹¹ Those who love God as he did are his true children and disciples and will share in his reward.¹² Because of its eminence, God's fatherhood must be distinguished from the relationship between a human parent and his children: Not only is He infinitely interested and solicitous, but His power also knows no limit and His sovereignty is universal.¹³ For this reason, His title "Our Father" is consistently coupled with that other: "Our King."¹⁴ Still, His authority respects the dignity of man's free choice. "Everything is in the hands of heaven, except the fear of heaven, as it says: 'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God?' (Deut 10:12)."¹⁵ The Father does not force His children, He guides them.

His fatherhood differs from human fatherhood in still another respect. Even when His children wander astray, He keeps faith; even when they have lost every claim to be called "children of Abraham," God is compassionate and merciful. According to Rabbi Samuel ben Nahmani, the Holy One will one day say to Abraham: "Your children

10. See Suk. 49b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sukkah*, p. 232.

11. Ab. 5:3; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, pp. 59-60.

12. See Ab. 5:19; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 72. Abraham is "the friend of God" *par excellence* and the pattern for all who come after him, as is clearly indicated in Is 41:8 and 2 Par 20:7, where he is given the title *'oheb*, "he who loves," or simply the "friend." The theme of the divine love for the patriarchs overflowing onto their descendants is treated in Men. 53a. (cf. *B. Talmud, Menahoth*, p. 319.) There the congregation of Israel is said to pray: "Lord of the universe, show thy gratefulness unto me for making thee known in the world." He is said to reply: "My gratefulness is not with thee, but with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who first made me known in the world." And a few lines later, at the end of this section and the beginning of 53b, p. 320, there is a remarkable catalogue of those whom Scripture privileges with the otherwise unusual adjective *yadid* (or its derivative, *yedidut*), meaning "beloved, darling": "Let the beloved (King Solomon), the son of the beloved (Abraham), come and build the beloved (Temple), for the Beloved (the Lord Himself) in the portion of the beloved (Tribe of Benjamin), that the beloved (Israel) may receive atonement therein." (See 2 Kg 12:25; Jer 11:15; Ps 83 [84]:2; Is 5:1; Deut 33:12; Jer 12:7.)

13. See Ta'an. 23b; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 120.

14. See Ta'an. 25b; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 132, the prayer of Rabbi Akiba. Compare the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* or "Eighteen Blessings" in *Daily Prayer Book*, trans. Birnbaum, pp. 82-96.

15. Meg. 25a; cf. *B. Talmud, Megillah*, p. 150.

have sinned against me." And Abraham will answer that, for the sanctification of God's name, they ought to be exterminated. Then the Holy One will address Jacob whose own unruly family should have given him understanding; his judgment, too, will be to have the children of Israel wiped out. Finally, the Holy One will turn to Isaac: "Your children have sinned against me." But he will counter: "Sovereign of the universe, are they *my* children and not *your* children? You called them once 'Israel, my son, my firstborn' (Ex 4:22). Now you say they are *my* sons, not *your* sons."¹⁶ This, in the opinion of Rabbi Samuel, is the plea that God seeks and hears.

The intensity of this fatherly love is brilliantly developed in a parallel passage that describes a conversation between God and the prophet Hosea. When the Holy One complained to the prophet: "Your children have sinned," Hosea suggested that God exchange them for another nation more deserving of His affection. "Said the Holy One, blessed be He: 'What shall I do with this old man? I will order him to go and marry a harlot and beget for himself children of harlotry, and then I will order him to send her away from his presence. If he is able to send her away, so too will I send Israel away!'" After two sons and a daughter were born to the prophet, he is told to leave his wife. "Sovereign of the universe, I have children by her, and I can neither divorce her nor expel her!" "If that is the case with you, whose wife is a harlot and whose children are the children of harlotry, so that you know not whether they are your own or another's, then how do you say to me of Israel, my children, the children of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob: 'Exchange them for a different people?'"¹⁷

The principle in this piece of rabbinical interpretation is simply that a son, even in his rebellion, is still a son. A father's relationship with his child is not destroyed, even though that relationship be implicitly or explicitly repudiated. Rabbi Judah disputes this view: "When you behave as sons, you are designated sons, but when you do not behave as sons, you are not designated sons."¹⁸ Rabbi Meir, on the other hand, insists that whether the children of Israel behave as sons or not, they remain God's designated sons, for it is said: "They are

16. Shab. 89b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 426.

17. Pes. 87a-b; cf. *B. Talmud, Pesahim*, pp. 460-462.

18. Kid. 36a; cf. *B. Talmud, Kiddushin*, p. 177.

stupid children (Jer 4:22)." He reminds those who declare that Israel's descendants may well be called sons when they act foolishly, but never when they lack faith, of the words of Scripture: "They are sons in whom there is no faith (Deut 32:20)." And for the sake of those who argue that when the children of Israel serve idols, they are not good sons but sons who act corruptly, he recalls the prediction of the prophet: "And it shall come to pass that, instead of that which was said unto them: 'You are not my people,' it shall be said unto them: 'You are the children of the living God' (Os 2:1)." ¹⁹ His love is eternal. He does not change. In the end He will triumph over Israel's infidelity.

Because the sublime disparity between the Father and His children is most perfectly demonstrated by His constancy in the face of their perpetual betrayals, Yahweh's relationship with Israel is best conveyed in the terms: loving-kindness, mercy, graciousness, compassion, pity. The Hebrew roots *ḥsd*, *ḥnm*, *ṛḥm*, *ḥml*, point to divine attributes most willingly and lovingly recalled by His wayward children. "Blessed are you, O Lord, for you bestow loving-kindness upon your people Israel." ²⁰ The rabbis even go to the extreme of having God pray to Himself: "May it be my will that my mercy may suppress my anger, and that my mercy may prevail over my other attributes, so that I may deal with my children in the attribute of mercy and on their behalf stop short of the limit of strict justice." ²¹

One of the most charming examples of the power of a child over his heavenly Father is that of Ḥoni the Circle-Drawer who, when rain was desperately needed, drew a circle round about himself and informed God that he would not budge from it until He sent rain. "Your children have turned to me because they believe me to be a member of your household. I swear by your great name that I will not move from here until you have mercy upon your children." Rain did come but only in small drops; the people then complained that the Holy One had sent just enough rain to release Ḥoni from his oath but not enough to fill the cisterns and wells. When Ḥoni prayed again, rain fell in drops as big as barrel tops, so that all feared God was about to destroy the world. Once more Ḥoni prayed, the rain stopped, and

19. *Ibid.*; see also B.B. 10a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, pp. 45-46.

20. Ber. 60b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 379.

21. Ber. 7a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 30.

the people went into the fields rejoicing. At this point, Simeon ben Shetaḥ reproached the Circle-Drawer, but not without grudging admiration: "Were it not that you are Honi, I would have placed you under the ban. What shall I do to you who act so petulantly before the All-present? And yet He grants your desire! You are like a son who speaks: 'Father, bathe me in warm water, wash me in cold water, and he does it; give me nuts, give me almonds, give me peaches, give me pomegranates, and he gives them to him.'"²²

To the rabbinical mind such fatherly indulgence in no way lessens personal responsibility in the children nor does it justify want of concern for their duty of serving Him. On the contrary, the "excesses" of God's loving-kindness are a never-ending invitation to greater fidelity and increased effort. In times of discouragement and national calamity, they are a constant reminder that the Lord does not abandon His chosen ones, and in times of moral decline and decadence they are the basis of the bitter self-reproach that alone can lead the loved one back to the Loving One.²³ He alone can say: "Even if your sins be as many as the years that have continued in uninterrupted fashion from the six days of creation until now, yet they shall be as white as snow."²⁴ This emphasis on God's clemency and compassion for Israel is not meant to encourage presumption or national exclusivism; it is a corollary of the fact that God demands more from those He loves the more. As a man's awareness of his place in God's sight is sharpened and refined, his sense of inadequacy deepens; he relies all the more on the pity of Him who chooses as His instruments the weak and the unworthy. It is in this spirit that the prophet prays:

O Lord, the great and awful God, who keepest covenant and mercy with them that love thee and keep thy commandments, we have sinned, and have dealt iniquitously, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and have turned aside from thy commandments and from thine ordinances. . . . We do not present our supplications before thee because of our righteousness, but because of thy great compassions.

(Dan 9:4-5, 18)

22. Ta'an. 23a; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, pp. 115-117.

23. See Ber. 7a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 32.

24. Shab. 89b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 425. The Masoretic text of this quotation from Is 1:18 reads: "Even if your sins be like scarlet," but the word *shanim* can also be understood to mean *years*, and it is this interpretation that the text develops.

Not even a father's affection and concern rule out the trials and reverses that are the lot of every man born into this world, be he Jacob or Esau, Isaac or Ishmael. Just and unjust, both must suffer. The perennial problem: "Why does the way of the godless prosper, why live all the treacherous in contentment?" (Jer 12:1) cannot be solved to man's complete satisfaction. Still, the Talmud tries this answer: Afflictions in this world, even those as severe as leprosy and childlessness, need not be penalties or signs of divine displeasure; they may be tokens of God's esteem and pledges of happiness in the world-to-come. "If a man sees that painful sufferings visit him, let him examine his conduct. If after examining himself he finds nothing objectionable, let him attribute it to the neglect of the study of Torah. But if he does not find himself at fault in this, let him be sure that his afflictions are *yissurin me 'ahabah*, chastenings of love. For it is said: 'And the Lord was pleased with him, hence He crushed him with disease' (Is 53:10)." Raba, to whom these words are attributed, goes on to warn that the chastenings of love must be accepted with love and quotes in support of it another part of the Isaian verse: "To see if his soul would offer itself in restitution."²⁵ Then he adds: "Just as the trespass-offering must be brought by consent, so the suffering must be endured with consent."²⁶

The rabbis do not agree as to the propriety of applying the term "chastenings of love" to afflictions that entail an interruption in the study of Torah or in daily prayer. Surely a man deprived of these two great blessings cannot consider himself the object of God's pleasure! R. Abba, however, reasons that even afflictions of this kind must be included among the "chastenings of love," for if, according to the Torah, a slave is given his freedom in return for the unjust loss of one of his teeth or one of his eyes (see Ex 21:26-27) what will be the recompense of the man who suffers in his whole body because he is deprived of study or prayer?²⁷

What is true of personal suffering is also true of the trials of the

25. The Confraternity edition of the Bible reads this verse from one of the Servant Songs somewhat differently: "But the Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity. If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him." The Bible of Jerusalem and many other translations agree with the Confraternity version.

26. Ber. 5a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 18.

27. See Ber. 5a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 19.

nation. "The Holy One, blessed be He, gave Israel three precious gifts, and all of them were given only through sufferings. These are the Torah, the land of Israel, and the world-to-come."²⁸ However little he may comprehend the adversities that beset him, the pious Israelite can never admit that his suffering is meaningless; with Nahum of Gamzu he likes to say: "Even this is for the best!"²⁹

A father's love that leaves the education of his children in their own hands would be meager indeed. Hence the Father in heaven gives personal guidance and discipline to His children through the Torah, which is the expression of His innermost thoughts and plans, and which surpasses all human wisdom, all philosophy. In the eyes of the rabbis, it is the blueprint for the building-up of God's household here on earth, the supreme gift of His love: Beloved are Israel in that an instrument more desirable than gold was given them, an instrument wherewith the world had been created, God's Torah.³⁰ Precious is His teaching and desirable: "With every word that went forth from the mouth of the Holy One, the whole world was filled with the fragrance of sweet spices, for 'His lips are as lilies dropping liquid myrrh' (Cant 5:13)."³¹

Far from exhausting the pious Jew under their weight, the many precepts of Torah, however minute and exacting, however seemingly trivial, are tokens of a Father's concern lest His children go astray: "Beloved are Israel, for the Holy One surrounded them with precepts: *tefillin* on their arms and on their heads, *zizit* on their garments, and *mezuzot* on their doorposts." When they are without them, as David was on entering the bath and seeing himself naked, they need not fear the absence of precepts, for even then they bear in their flesh circumcision.³² There is no activity, no time of day exempt from the

28. *Ibid.*

29. Ta'an. 21a; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 105. Nahum gained his title from his habit of saying, no matter what befell him: "Even this—*gam zu*—is for the best." There is also Rabbi Akiba's saying: "Whatever the All-merciful does is for good." (Ber. 60b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 380.)

30. See Ab. 3:14; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 38.

31. Shab. 88b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 421.

32. See Men. 43b; cf. *B. Talmud, Menahoth*, p. 262. Psalm 118 [119] abounds in enthusiastic expressions of love for God's law: "In the way of your decrees I rejoice. In your statutes I will delight. Had not your law been my delight, I should have perished in my affliction. Your decrees are my inheritance forever; the joy of my heart they are. See how I love your precepts, O Lord. I keep your decrees and love them deeply" (vss. 14, 16, 92, 111, 159, 167 among many others).

sanctity of the divine law. Good and noble deeds are to be performed not spontaneously, not from sheer joy of doing what is right, but rather because they are commanded. "He who is commanded and acts," the Talmud teaches, "stands higher than he who is not commanded and acts, for there is a greater reward in store for those who do good deeds when so bidden, than for those who do them unbidden."³³ For him who is faithful in his obedience to the numerous precepts of the Law, the reward is an ever-deepening consciousness of the requirements of God's holy will, thus he is led towards an ever more exact fulfillment of what is expected of him. As the rabbis see it: "One precept draws another precept, as one transgression draws another, for the recompense for performing a precept is a further precept, and the recompense for performing a transgression is a further transgression."³⁴

The gift of Torah is so lordly, and its recipients are so pitiable that, according to rabbinical legend, the angels protested against this divine prodigality. When Moses ascended into the divine Presence to be given the Torah, the heavenly ministers exclaimed: "Sovereign of the universe, what business has one born of woman among us?" "He has come to receive the Torah," God answered, only to be met with the dismay of His court: "The secret treasure you have hidden for nine hundred and seventy-four generations before the world's creation, you now intend to give to flesh and blood?" Moses was terrified at this unexpected opposition and did not dare defend Israel's claim until he was encouraged by God Himself. The case he presented was irrefutable. In a point-by-point analysis of the wisdom of the Decalogue, he showed that each of its commandments applied only to an earthly situation and that the angels, therefore, ought not resent the honor given to man. "Did you go down into Egypt and were you enslaved by Pharaoh?" he asked them. "To whom other than Israel can the words apply: 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt' (Ex 20:2)? Do you dwell among idol-worshippers as we do? To whom, then, should be addressed these words: 'You shall have no other gods'? Do you perform work that you need to rest and keep the Sabbath holy? Do you have business

33. 'A.Z. 3a; cf. *B. Talmud*, 'Abodah Zarah, p. 6; see also B.K., 38a; cf. *B. Talmud*, Baba Kamma, p. 215.

34. Ab. 4:2; cf. *B. Talmud*, Aboth, p. 44.

dealings so that you are liable to take the name of God in vain? Have you fathers and mothers to honor? Are you envious of others or tempted, that you need to be warned against murder, adultery, or theft?" After this impassioned plea the angels straightway withdrew their objections; each of them was moved to love Moses and bestow a gift upon him.³⁵

II

TO THE Torah's message of love, the rabbis hold, there is only one conceivable response: complete surrender and adherence to its many and minute ordinances and, through them, to the Torah's Giver. Love cannot be sterile; it must express itself concretely and persistently. Since to the rabbinic mind God's love is revealed through the Torah, Israel's love manifests itself in fidelity to the same Torah. Even before she heard the full details of His plan, Israel impetuously committed herself to its fulfillment, the rabbis maintain. This burst of ardent confidence was supremely pleasing to the Lord, who tenderly said to her: "Thou hast ravished my heart with one of your eyes (Cant 4:9)." This meant that her good intention, "one of her eyes," was acceptable, even before it could be put into action, even before she looked at Him with "both of her eyes."³⁶ A further illustration of Israel's generosity in accepting the Law rabbinic exegesis draws from Exodus 24:7, where the people cry out: "We will do" before saying: "We will hearken." This causes God to wonder: "Who revealed to my children this secret of the ministering angels—first they fulfill and then they hearken?"³⁷

Regard for the Torah is part of Israel's consciousness, as even a cursory reading of the postexilic and New Testament writings verifies. This respect is intensified in postbiblical times, and it is no surprise to find it dominant in a legal corpus like the Talmud. There, God is said to have attached a condition to His blessing on the works of creation: "If Israel accept my Law, all will be well, but if not, I shall

35. Shab. 88b-89a; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, pp. 421-423.

36. See Shab. 88b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 419.

37. Shab. 88a; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 418. The angels are thought to possess this secret of unquestioning generosity because Psalm 102[103]:20 declares: "Bless the Lord all you His angels . . . who fulfill His word, who hearken to the voice of His spoken word. . . ." Intriguing though the rabbinic interpretation is, it ignores the parallelism of the verse. To "hearken to His voice" is just another way of saying to "fulfill His commands."

reduce you to a state of chaos.”³⁸ No doubt, in this the rabbis are guilty of excess, but to understand them, one must remember the divine origin of the Law and its virtual identification with divine wisdom. One must remember, too, that to them the Torah was a marriage contract, the bond of union and fidelity between the people and their God. Commenting on Deuteronomy 26:17-18—where the Lord is said to have made a pact with Israel that she be particularly His own, provided she keep all His commandments—the rabbis have Him turn to the people: “You have made me the only object of your love in the world, and I shall make you the only object of my love in the world.”³⁹

Cult of the law easily degenerates into cult of the letter, and it was this that Jesus condemned. But as the revelation of God’s intention, the Torah does demand sensitive attention. For the rabbis, it is the way of perfection, its knowledge being an indispensable foundation for all piety. “The goal of wisdom is repentance and good deeds; a man should not study Torah and Mishnah and then despise his father and mother and teacher and his superior in wisdom and rank.”⁴⁰

In this light we must read the many texts condemning the *ammei ha-’arez*, the unlettered country folk. Ignorant of the fine points of the Law, they did not observe them; hence they were considered ritually impure, men to be avoided. Still, the rabbis hold out some encouragement to them: By helping support a scholar of Torah, they can promote the study of the Law indirectly, and thus adhere to the divine Presence.⁴¹ The rabbis of Jabneh used to say:

I am God’s creature, and my fellow, the *am ha-’arez*, is God’s creature. I rise early for my work, and he rises early for his work. Just as he does not presume to do my work, so do I not presume to do his work. If you say: “I do much and he does little,” remember what we have learned: A man may do much or little; it is all the same, provided he directs his heart to heaven.⁴²

This, after all, is the aim of revelation, to direct man’s heart to God. All the essential principles of the Torah can be summed up in one text: “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct

38. ‘A.Z. 3a; cf. *B. Talmud*, ‘*Abodah Zarah*, p. 6.

39. *Ber. 6a*; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Berakoth*, pp. 25-26, see n. 12.

40. *Ber. 17a*; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Berakoth*, p. 102.

41. See *Ket. 111b*; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Kethuboth*, p. 720.

42. *Ber. 17a*; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Berakoth*, p. 101; see also *Men. 110a*; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Menahoth*, p. 682.

your paths (Prov 3:6)."⁴³ In order that a man may think of God in all he does and cleave to Him in bad as well as in good times, he must be absorbed heart, soul, and strength in the love of God.⁴⁴ All striving toward Him ought to be for the purest of motives.

One should not say: "I shall read Scripture that I may be called a sage; I shall study that I may be called rabbi; I shall study to be an elder and sit in the assembly of elders," rather should one learn out of love, and honor will come in the end, as it is written: "Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart"; and it is also said: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness"; also: "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her and happy is everyone that retains her" (Prov 7:3; 3:17, 18). Do good deeds for the sake of their Maker, and speak of the words of the Torah for their own sake. Do not make of them a crown wherewith to glorify yourself.⁴⁵

Love engendered by what passes, dies, as did the fancy of Amnon for Tamar, but love inspired by what endures is lasting.⁴⁶

A passage in the tractate *Soṭah* distinguishes, according to the purity of their intention, seven types of Pharisee.⁴⁷ Forgetting the slight variations in the interpretation of this text, there is first the Pharisee who performs his religious duties with unnecessary ostentation, second the Pharisee who is overhumble, third the Pharisee who is so

43. Ber. 63a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 397.

44. True piety is not a part-time affair, a matter to be kept within well-defined limits; it is all-embracing and perpetual. Its pervasiveness is illustrated by a talmudic passage where it is said that one must not be like Abraham who went up the mountain *once* to offer his son (see Gen 22), nor like Isaac, who *in the evening* went out into the field to meditate (see Gen 24:63), but like Jacob for whom God was a home (see Gen 28:11-19). His experience of the divine Presence led him to call the place where he had spent the night: *Beth-el*, "God is a home." (See Pes. 88a; cf. *B. Talmud, Pesachim*, p. 465.)

45. Ned. 62a; cf. *B. Talmud, Nedarim*, p. 197. The same thought appears several times in the Talmud: "Do good deeds, like the study of Torah, for their own sake and not for other motives. If one does them for other motives, it were better that he had not been created." (Ber. 17a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 102. In this text, "other motives" means the desire to criticize and quarrel.) "Whoever occupies himself with the Torah for its own sake, acquires by merit many things, nay more, the whole of the world is worth while for his sake. He is called a friend, a beloved, one that loves the All-present, one that loves his fellow-creatures, one that gladdens God, one that gladdens man." (Ab. 6:1; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 78.) Again: "Be not like unto servants who serve the master in the expectation of receiving a gratuity, but be like unto servants who serve the master without the expectation of receiving a gratuity, and let the fear of heaven be upon you." (Ab. 1:3; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 3.)

46. See Ab. 5:16; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 70.

47. See *Soṭ. 22b*; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, pp. 112-113.

scrupulous that he injures himself in turning from the sight of even a supposed evil, fourth the Pharisee whose head is always drooping low, and fifth the Pharisee who acts as if he had performed all that was expected of him and thus constantly exclaims: "What else is there for me to do?" But there are the two other types, quite different from the rest: those spurred by love and those impelled by fear. One interpretation of their love and fear sees them as love of rewards and fear of penalties. Interesting in this respect is the teaching of Rab Judah that a man should always engage himself in Torah and commandments, even though it be not for their own sake, for if he first occupies himself with them for other motives, he will eventually arrive at an untarnished devotion. Equally plausible, however, is the interpretation that refers the love and fear of the exemplary Pharisee not to rewards and penalties but to God Himself.

The relative merits of the fear and love of God as motives for a man's piety was a much disputed point among the rabbis.⁴⁸ Rabbi Joshua ben Hyrcanus, for instance, taught that Job served the Holy One, blessed be He, only from love, while his colleague Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah called upon the memory of his master as a witness against the novelty of this teaching:

Who will remove the dust from your eyes, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai? All your life you expounded that Job served the All-present from fear, as it is said: "That man was perfect and upright, and one who feared God" (Job 1:1), and now Joshua, the pupil of your pupil, teaches that what Job did was done from love!

The opinion that Job's devotion was of the highest order is also defended by Rabbi Meir, who admits that Abraham, like Job, is said to have feared God, but argues that as Abraham's fear was motivated by love, so was Job's. To Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar, love's superiority over fear is so plain that he declares: "With those who act from fear the merit remains for a thousand generations, while with those who act from love it remains effective for two thousand generations."⁴⁹

48. See *Soṭ.* 27b; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, p. 137.

49. Rabbi Meir argues that Abraham, the friend of God, the model for those who love God (see note 12), is commended in Gen 22:12 for fearing God. If Abraham's "fear" stemmed from his "love" it is safe, Rabbi Meir argues, to assume that Job's fear (1:1) had a similar origin. It may be that underlying this discussion is the question of whether a non-Jew, like Job, can achieve the status of a child of God, that is, one who is inspired by love, not by fear. (See *Soṭ.* 31a; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, p. 151.)

In Scripture, the term "fear of the Lord" does not imply cringing terror, as it might in English, but rather reverential awe. It is almost synonymous with what theology calls the "virtue of religion." What distinguishes "fear of the Lord" from "love of the Lord" is that one responds to His majesty and power, while the other answers His loving-kindness. Hence, when asked by two of his disciples which was better, to act out of the love of God or the fear of Him, Raba declined to commit himself: "Both of you are righteous rabbis, but one is actuated by love, the other by fear."⁵⁰

In the rabbinical attitude towards God, there is not only scrupulous obedience to the written law and the oral traditions, not only quiet submission to the discipline of suffering, but also a sense of humble gratitude: "So long as the soul is within me, I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, my God, and the God of my fathers. . . ." ⁵¹ The thanksgiving of the devout Jew rests first of all on His past mercies, especially on the gift of divine election. Each member of the community ought to regard the blessings and favors bestowed on his fathers as granted to him.

In every generation a man is bound to regard himself as though he personally had gone forth from Egypt. . . . Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol, and adore Him who wrought all these miracles for our fathers and ourselves; He brought us forth from bondage into freedom, from sorrow into joy, from mourning into festivity, from darkness into great light, and from servitude into redemption. Therefore let us say before Him, hallelujah.⁵²

It is as much a man's duty to bless God for evil that comes his way as it is to bless Him for the good.⁵³ He is to be thanked for shooting stars, earthquakes, thunderclaps, storms, lightnings, deserts, mountains, hills, seas, rivers, rain, indeed, for all of His works. He is to be thanked when one receives good news or bad, for the Holy One, blessed be He, is all-merciful, and whatever He does is good. The smallest details of daily life are occasions of gratitude and praise.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Ber. 60b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 378. The fact that one is privileged to praise the Lord and thank Him in a worthy manner is in itself a source of wonderment: "We give thanks to thee, O Lord our God, because we are able to give thee thanks." (See *Sot.* 40a; cf. *B. Talmud, Sotah*, p. 197.)

52. *Pes.* 116b; cf. *B. Talmud, Pesahim*, pp. 595-596.

53. See *Ber.* 54a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, pp. 327-328.

Upon awakening, a devout Jew is to say: "Blessed art thou who restorest their souls to the dead"; when he opens his eyes: "Blessed is He who opens the eyes of the blind"; when he stretches himself: "Blessed is He who loosens the bound"; when he dresses: "Blessed is He who clothes the naked"; when he rises: "Blessed is He who raises the bowed"; when he steps upon the ground: "Blessed is He who spread the earth upon the waters"; when he begins to walk: "Blessed is He who makes firm the steps of man"; when he ties his shoes: "Blessed is He who has supplied all my wants." Above all, He is to be blessed for having sanctified His people with the gift of His commandments for, in the eyes of the rabbis, commandments more than anything else are the mark of His abounding love for Israel. And to them, fidelity in the observance of the commandments, whether written in the Law or handed down by tradition, is the measure of Israel's love for Him.⁵⁴

III

GOD loves and is loved in return, but love does not end there; if the heart of the son is to beat with that of his Father, and the heart of the bride with that of her Beloved, their loves must be coextensive—all who are dear to the one must be dear to the other. In the family God has acquired for Himself here below, all members are responsible, one for the other. Divine affection and support streaming down on man from above move him to gratitude, but also to fraternal charity. Three are the cornerstones of the world: God's love for us, our love for Him, and our love for our fellow man. The Talmud says it this way: "The world is based on three things: Torah, divine service, and the practice of kindness."⁵⁵

To maintain God's world as He wills it, is the responsibility of man. The rabbis do not waver at the role of fraternal love as a firm basis for human society. According to the tractate Baba Bathra, ten strong

54. See Ber. 60b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, pp. 378-379.

55. Ab. 1:2; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 2. Another talmudic passage has God say: "If a man occupies himself with the study of the Torah and with the works of charity, and prays with the congregation, I account it to him as if he had redeemed me and my children from among the nations of the world." (Ber. 8a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 39.) Touching though the thought is that God shares Israel's exile and subjugation, it is strange in view of the rabbinic resistance to the mystery of the Incarnation.

things have been created in the world, but of all of them charity alone is completely dependable. It alone survives every assault:

Rock is hard but iron cleaves it. Iron is hard but fire softens it. Fire is hard but water quenches it. Water is strong but the clouds bear it. Clouds are strong, but the wind scatters them. The wind is strong but the body bears it. The body is strong but fright crushes it. Fright is strong but wine banishes it. Wine is strong but sleep works it off. Death is stronger than all, and charity saves from death.⁵⁶

Indispensable as an element in God's design for mankind, where shall charity be sought, if not among the members of God's own household? Hence the rabbis see the children of Israel distinguished from the nations by three characteristics: They are merciful, reverent, and benevolent. Only he who cultivates these three qualities is fit to join this nation.⁵⁷ Merciful they must be, for the Lord has been merciful to them, and reverent, for reverence His majesty demands. Their benevolence must be perceptive and this is, according to the rabbis, the main reason for Judaism's vast and detailed legal tradition. The word the rabbis use for help to the needy is *zedakah*, justice. In the Bible this word bears a rich variety of meanings but, no matter what its precise sense in a given scriptural passage, for the rabbis it always means "charity." Still the rabbis and the Bible are at one when Rabbi Judah ben Korḥa says that where there is strict justice there is no peace and where there is peace there is no strict justice, for in peace strict justice is exceeded. And where there is strict justice there is no charity, and where there is charity there is no strict justice. The kind of justice with which charity and peace abide is arbitration.⁵⁸

The great rabbis of the past sought "to build a fence around the Torah," that is, to add precept to precept, in an effort to insure that the original divine commands be fully kept.⁵⁹ Thus they held that in a man's dealings with his fellow, the one certain way of preserving

56. B.B. 10a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, p. 47. Here and later in the paper, "charity" is used in its everyday sense, that is, assistance to those in need, and not in the full sense St. Paul gives to the word, especially in 1 Cor 13.

57. See Yeb. 79a; cf. *B. Talmud, Yebamoth*, pp. 535-536. The remark is addressed to the Gibeonites, whose vindictiveness (see 2 Kg 21:1-10) only emphasizes the moderation and humanity *expected* of Israelites.

58. See Sanh. 6b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, p. 22.

59. According to one rabbinical opinion, Jerusalem was destroyed because the judgments of her courts complied only with biblical law, without going beyond its requirements. (See B.M. 30b; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Mezi'a*, pp. 188-189.)

justice is to go beyond the requirements of strict justice. Those who love God are "those who are insulted but do not insult, hear themselves reviled without answering, act through love and rejoice in suffering."⁶⁰ They do not stand on their rights, nor do they say as ordinary human justice dictates: "What is mine is mine and what is yours is yours." Even less do they imitate the wicked whose attitude is: "What is mine is mine and what is yours is mine," or that of the unlearned who destroy all order with their practice of: "What is mine is yours and what is yours is mine." No, the pious, respecting the rights of others, claim nothing for themselves: "What is mine is yours, what is yours belongs to you."⁶¹

The law of charity is so broad and imperative, that Rabbi Assi can teach: "Charity is equal to all the other religious precepts combined."⁶² Again, Rabbi Eleazar, commenting on the prophetic injunction: "It has been told to you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you (Mic 6:8)," maintains: "'To do justly' means to act in accordance with justice; 'to love mercy' refers to acts of loving-kindness, and 'to walk humbly with thy God' refers to attending funerals and dowering a bride for her wedding."⁶³ For the talmudic masters the commandment of loving one's neighbor as oneself means to apply to him the same standards of understanding and generosity we like to see applied to ourselves. The famous Rabbi Hillel stated it in a negative way: "What is hateful to you, do not do unto your neighbor: That is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it."⁶⁴ But the Talmud does not lack positive

60. Shab. 88b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 419; see also Git. 36b; cf. *B. Talmud, Giṭṭin*, p. 151, and Yom. 23a; cf. *B. Talmud, Yoma*, p. 104.

61. Ab. 5:10; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 67.

62. B.B. 9a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, p. 41. In the same book we read: "Whoever turns away his eyes from one who appeals for charity is considered as if he were serving idols." (B.B. 10a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, p. 46.)

63. Suk. 49b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sukkah*, p. 232.

64. Shab. 31a; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 140. These words were the answer the gentle Hillel gave to a pagan who had come to him after having been driven away by the stern Shammai for having asked the "impossible": "Make me a proselyte, on the condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot." With but few exceptions, the Talmud quotes the biblical injunction: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Lev 19:18)" as a deterrent to harsh penalties to be meted out to criminals. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" implies 'thou shalt choose for a convict the easiest possible execution.' (B.K. 51a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Ḳamma*, p. 292; see also Keth. 37b; cf. *B. Talmud, Ketuboth*, p. 206, Pes. 75a; cf. *B. Talmud, Pesahim*, p. 388, Soṭ. 8b; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, p. 35, Sanh. 45a, 52a, 52b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 294, 352, 355.)

expressions of the golden rule. Rabbi Jose teaches: "Let the property of your fellow be as precious unto you as your own," and Rabbi Eliezer: "Let the honor of your friend be as dear to you as your own."⁶⁵

The rabbis make a distinction between *zedakah*, "charity" or almsgiving, and *gemilut hasadim*, a term difficult to translate, meaning "deeds of love," "tokens of kindness," or simply "loving-kindness." Of the two, *gemilut hasadim*, is by far the nobler. It is in three respects that it excels charity: Charity requires no personal involvement, only money, but loving-kindness demands one's person and one's money. Charity can be given only to the poor, loving-kindness to both the rich and the poor. Charity can be carried out only among the living; loving-kindness, however, reaches both the living and the dead. The dead, the rabbis say, are shown kindness if one attends their burial. Again, the reward of charity depends entirely upon the extent of the kindness that inspires it, for it is said: "Sow to yourselves according to your *zedakah*, your charity, but reap according to your *hesed*, your loving-kindness (Os 10:12)."⁶⁶ Greater than any gift of money is the gift of the heart: "He who gives a small coin to a poor man obtains six blessings (see Is 58:7-9), but he who addresses to him words of comfort obtains eleven (see 58:10-12)."⁶⁷

Generosity and personal concern in the well-being of others reflect, indeed, continue God's own loving-kindness: "He who executes charity and justice is regarded as though he had filled all the world with kindness, for it is said: 'He loves charity and justice, the earth is full of the loving-kindness of the Lord' (Ps 32[33]:5)."⁶⁸ Hence the rabbis like to refer to the Pentateuch and the acts of divine benevolence it records as an illustration of the devout Jew's way of life. When it tells that the Lord God made coats of skin for Adam and his wife, they see there the pattern for our care of the naked. When they read that He buried Moses in a valley, they find in it the exemplar of our duty toward the dead.⁶⁹ Thus Rabbi Hama takes "You shall walk after the Lord your God (Deut 13:5)" to mean that a man ought to imitate the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He: clothing the naked as He clothed Adam and Eve (see Gen 3:21), visiting the

65. Ab. 2:12, 2:10; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, pp. 22, 20.

66. Suk. 49b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sukkah*, p. 233.

67. B.B. 9b; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, p. 44.

68. Suk. 49b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sukkah*, p. 233.

69. See Soṭ. 14a; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, pp. 72-73.

sick as He visited Abraham (see 18:1), comforting the mourners as He comforted Isaac after the death of his father (see 25:11), burying the dead as He buried Moses (see Deut 34:6).⁷⁰ Again, by the fact that God was "best man" for Adam and Eve (see Gen 2:22) "the Torah teaches a maxim of behavior, that a man of eminence should associate himself with a lesser man in acting as his best man, and he should not take it amiss."⁷¹ Better than any of the rabbis quoted does Abba Saul sum up the godlike orientation of brotherly love when he says: "Be thou like Him: Just as He is gracious and compassionate, so be thou gracious and compassionate."⁷²

If this principle of conduct is observed, the example of the few will impel others to wish to know God more clearly and serve Him more perfectly:

If someone studies Scripture and Mishnah, and attends on the disciples of the wise, is honest in business, and speaks pleasantly to persons, of him people will say: "Woe unto people who have not studied the Torah, for this man has studied the Torah—look how fine his ways are, how righteous his deeds. He is a true servant of the Lord. Of him does Scripture say: 'Thou art my servant Israel, in whom I will be glorified' (Is 49:3)."⁷³

On the other hand, a man whose study of the Torah is belied by a corrupt life, profanes the divine Name. The responsibility of every Jew to reflect God's glory in this world has made the rabbis utter maxims open to misunderstanding because they stress peace and harmony in man's relationship with his fellows.

Be thou of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace. Be thou one who loves his fellow creatures, and thus brings them to the Torah.⁷⁴

Make your study of the Torah a matter of fixed regularity; speak little, but do much; and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.⁷⁵

70. See *ibid.*

71. Ber. 61a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 383.

72. Shab. 133b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 670. This injunction of Abba Saul, a teacher of the second century A.D., is obviously akin to the saying of Jesus: "Be merciful, therefore, even as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36).

73. Yom. 86a; cf. *B. Talmud, Yoma*, p. 427. This observation by a rabbi who lived at the turn of the second century reminds one of Jesus' call: "Let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

74. Ab. 1:12; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 8.

75. Ab. 1:15; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 9.

Be quick to render service to a superior and easy of approach to a suppliant and receive all men with cheerfulness.⁷⁶

One should always strive to be on the best of terms with his brethren and with his relatives, and with all men, and even the heathen in the streets, in order that he may be beloved above and well-liked below and be acceptable to his fellow creatures.⁷⁷

Love shown to others is love shown to God. This the rabbis find suggested in the proverb: "He who has pity on the poor lends unto the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed (Prov 19:17)." Thus Rabbi Johanan can say: "Were it not written in the Scripture, one would not dare say it: The borrower is a servant to the lender."⁷⁸ However little time, effort, or money a man expends in the service of others, he will be repaid abundantly by God Himself. So deeply does the Father involve Himself in the fate of His wayward sons, that even when a man is condemned for blasphemy and suffers the death penalty, He is made to say: "My head is too heavy for me! my arm is too heavy for me!" To this the Talmud adds: "If God is so grieved over the blood of the wicked that is shed, how much more so over the blood of the just!"⁷⁹ Rabbi Hanina goes still further and states that one who smites a man, attacks the Holy One.⁸⁰

God's solicitude, both for His people and its individual members,

76. Ab. 3:12; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 35.

77. Ber. 17a; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 102. Other instances of the same outlook are: "It was related of Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai that no one ever gave him a greeting first, not even a heathen in the street" (*ibid.*). "Anyone from whom the spirit of his fellow-creatures derives satisfaction, from him the spirit of the All-present too derives satisfaction. But anyone from whom the spirit of his fellow-creatures derives no satisfaction, from him the spirit of the All-present too derives no satisfaction." (Ab. 3:10; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 33.) Such a viewpoint risks degenerating into a pursuit of popular approval and acclaim; it easily creates, as Father Spicq notes, an atmosphere of flattery, hypocrisy, and compromise. (See *op. cit.*, p. 115.) Against abuses like these Jesus hurled some of His most severe condemnations. (See Mt 23:5-7; Mk 12:38-39; Lk 11:43-44.) But His warnings were, we must not forget, directed at abuses, not at the principle of seeking peace and harmony.

78. B.B. 10a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, pp. 47-48: "If a man gives but a farthing to a beggar, he is deemed worthy to receive the divine Presence, as it is written: 'I shall behold thy face in righteousness, *zedakah*' (Prov 10:12)."

79. Sanh. 46a, b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 304, 306. This text continues with an illustrative parable: Two brothers, twins, lived in the same city. One was made king, while the other took to highway robbery. When, at the king's command, the bandit was hanged, all who saw him exclaimed: 'The king is hanged!' Whereupon the king commanded that the body be taken down. As the robber of the parable bore the likeness of his royal brother, so the executed criminal bears the indelible image of God; to leave him on the gibbet overnight would be irreverence.

80. See Sanh. 58b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, p. 398.

manifest in history and in personal experience, invites man to be tireless in his love for others. Whoever is in a position to pray for his fellows and does not do so, is a sinner; for a scholar, he must pray even to the point of sickness.⁸¹ If he hopes to have his prayers answered, he must be forbearing in his dealings with his fellows.⁸² If he expects to have his transgressions passed over at the divine tribunal, he must pass over the transgressions of others against himself, make no retaliation, seek no revenge, bear no grudge, and do his utmost to effect a reconciliation.⁸³ The interior life cannot be nourished by worship or by study of Torah alone, for "he who performs charity is greater than he who offers all the sacrifices, and he who occupies himself only with the study of the Torah is as if he had no God."⁸⁴ A community under heaven's sentence will find no expiation merely through sacrifice and Torah but only by Torah united to charitable deeds.⁸⁵ This explains the familiar teaching that the Day of Atonement remits transgressions between man and the All-present, but for transgressions of a man against his fellow, the Day of Atonement offers no remission until the offender has made peace with the offended. It is not enough to ask God's pardon, one must also ask it of the brother who has been hurt.⁸⁶ And the merit of a fast lies in the food saved for the poor, in the charity dispensed.⁸⁷

81. See Ber. 12b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 70.

82. See Ta'an. 25b; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 132. Forbearance or the lack of it are the reasons why, according to the Talmud, the lengthy prayers of Rabbi Eliezer for rain remain unanswered, while the response to Rabbi Akiba's brief supplication is immediate.

83. See Yom. 23a; cf. *B. Talmud, Yoma*, p. 104.

84. Suk. 49b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sukkah*, p. 233. An exchange between two imprisoned rabbis sheds light on the power of charity. "When Rabbi Eleazar ben Peraṭa and Rabbi Ḥanina ben Teradion were arrested, the first said to the second: 'Happy art thou that thou hast been arrested on one charge; woe is me, for I am arrested on five charges.' Rabbi Ḥanina replied: 'Happy art thou, who hast been arrested on five charges, but will be rescued; woe is me, though having been arrested on one charge, will not be rescued, for thou hast occupied thyself with the study of the Torah as well as with acts of benevolence, whereas I occupied myself with Torah alone.'" (*A.Z.* 17b; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Abodah Zarah*, pp. 88-89.)

85. See R.H. 18a; cf. *B. Talmud, Rosb Hasbanah*, p. 71. Rabbah, who upheld the expiatory value of the study of Torah without charitable deeds, lived for forty years, while Abaye, for whom charitable deeds were the complement of the study of Torah, lived for sixty years. Abaye's long life is seen by the Talmud as the divine approval of his opinion.

86. See Yom. 85b; cf. *B. Talmud, Yoma*, p. 423. This opinion of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, of the end of the first century, parallels Jesus' admonition: "If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has anything against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Mt 5:23-24; see also Mk 11:25.)

87. See Sanh. 35a; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, p. 222, especially n. 1.

IV

LIKE God's loving-kindness, man's charity must strive to ennoble its recipient by helping him remove, whenever possible, the cause of the evil that besets him. Thus the rabbis hold in high esteem the peacemakers, men who "cling to the making of peace," who "seek peace and pursue it (Ps 33[34]:15)," who by tact and gentle persuasion induce others to compose their differences.⁸⁸ For he who causes others to do good is greater than the doer.⁸⁹ This thought the rabbis also apply to financial matters. Collectors, who lead many others on the road to charity, will shine like the stars forever and ever.⁹⁰ Thus must one interpret paradoxical statements such as these: "He who lends is greater than he who performs charity," for he allows the borrower to maintain his dignity by repaying in the end whatever he receives. But "he who forms a partnership is greater than all," for by assuming part of the responsibility for a joint enterprise he makes it his own concern that the funds are well administered.⁹¹

True charity must be as anonymous as possible and avoid humiliating the recipient. In the Temple, the rabbis tell, two chambers were set aside, one for contributions to the Temple, the other for the support of the poor. The pious Israelite would secretly deposit his alms in this second room, and the needy could enter with equal secrecy to receive financial aid; onlookers could not be certain whether one entered to give or to receive.⁹² It is said of Rabbi Jannai that when he saw a man give a coin in public to a poor person, he turned to the giver: "It would have been better to have given him nothing than to have given to him publicly and thus to have put him to shame."⁹³

Far from following an absolute norm, charity must be discreetly proportioned to a person's accustomed needs and his station in life.

88. See Kid. 40a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Kiddushin*, p. 197 and Yeb. 109a-b; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Yebamoth*, p. 761. Jesters too are considered pleasing to God. They gladden the depressed and by their good cheer ease tension and end strife. (See Ta'an. 22a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Ta'anith*, p. 110.)

89. See B.B. 9a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Baba Bathra*, p. 41.

90. See B.B. 8b; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Baba Bathra*, p. 38.

91. See Shab. 63a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Shabbath*, p. 298.

92. See Shek. 5:6; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Shekalim*, p. 21.

93. Hag. 5a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Hagigah*, pp. 19-20; see also Ket. 67b; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Kethuboth*, pp. 412-413. "A man who gives charity in secret is greater than Moses our teacher," was a saying of Rabbi Eleazar. (B.B. 9b; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Baba Bathra*, p. 43.)

This does not mean that the poor man is to be made rich, yet the lengths to which the rabbis are said to have gone in fulfilling this precept are often quite startling. Hillel the elder, we are told, bought a horse and a slave for a certain poor man of good family. When, on one occasion, the slave was not at hand to run before his master, Hillel ran three miles himself.⁹⁴ Another of the many anecdotes that illustrates the rule that charity must take into account even the supposed needs of the recipient, tells that every year Rabbi 'Ukba sent a large amount of money to a poor neighbor on the eve of the Day of Atonement. Once he sent the gift through his son, who returned shortly with the report that the man had no need of his father's help. "Why?" asked the father, "what have you seen?" "I saw them spraying old wine before him!" "Is he so delicate then?" the father wondered and, doubling the amount, sent his son back.⁹⁵

Again, love for one's fellows must be disinterested. Of Rabbi Eleazar ben Birtah it is said that he was so generous that the charity collectors used to hide from him, lest he give them everything he had.⁹⁶ On one occasion, he pursued them and begged to know what was their mission: It was to provide for the marriage of an orphaned pair. He said to them: "I swear, the orphans must take precedence over my own daughter" and gave them all he had, except one small coin with which he bought some grain to take home. When his wife and daughter looked in the granary, they found it overflowing as the result of a miracle. But the rabbi would have none of it: "You have no more right to share in it than has any poor person in Israel."⁹⁷ It is no more fitting to profit from one's good deeds, he held, than from the study of Torah. Disinterestedness, in this and similar texts, means doing something for spiritual motives in preference to worldly ones, but it does not

94. See Ket. 67b; cf. *B. Talmud, Kethuboth*, p. 410.

95. See Ket. 67b; cf. *B. Talmud, Kethuboth*, p. 413.

96. See Ta'an. 24a; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 123. However admirable, Rabbi Eleazar's altruism is not to be imitated, the Talmud holds. Charity must not be extravagant. The second-century Synod of Usha, in Galilee, ordained that a man "should not spend more than a fifth of his wealth . . . since by spending more, he might himself come to be in need of the help of people." (Ket. 50a; cf. *B. Talmud, Kethuboth*, p. 286; see also Ket. 67b; cf. *B. Talmud, Kethuboth*, pp. 413-414; 'Ar. 28a; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Arakin*, p. 167.) The importance of self-reliance and self-sufficiency is tersely expressed in the famous axiom of Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self only, what am I? And if not now, when?" (Ab. 1:14; cf. *B. Talmud, Aboth*, p. 8; see also B.M. 62a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Mezi'a*, p. 369.)

97. Ta'an. 24a; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 123.

imply absence of hope for reward in the world-to-come, nor does it preclude the joy of doing something for the love of God.⁹⁸

Charity is a religious duty, a sharing in the common burden, indeed a participation in the divine attributes, thus almsgiving and, *a fortiori*, acts of kindness are, according to the rabbis, not only incumbent upon the self-supporting but even upon those who themselves depend on the charity fund:

Even a poor man who himself subsists on charity should give charity. If he does that, heaven will not again inflict poverty upon him. Whoever shears off part of his possessions and dispenses it in charity, is delivered from the punishment of Gehenna. Picture two sheep crossing a river, one shorn and the other not shorn; the shorn one gets across, the unshorn one does not.⁹⁹

If a man is anxious to give charity, the Holy One, blessed be He, furnishes him money with which to give it.¹⁰⁰

Finally, almsgiving is marked by urgency which varies, of course, with circumstances. In the East the need for food or drink could be so urgent that the slightest delay might lead to death. We read of Nahum of Gamzu that on a journey he was accosted by a poor man begging food. During the interval between his dismounting and unloading the pack animals, the beggar died. At this, the remorseful Nahum stretched himself out on the corpse and cried out: "May my hands which had no pity on your hands be cut off; may my legs which had no pity on your

98. When the proselyte King Monobaz of Adiabene was reproached by his relatives and family for squandering upon the poor all the treasures that had been so laboriously hoarded up by his predecessors, he said, among other things: "My fathers stored up below, and I am storing above. My fathers stored in a place which can be tampered with, but I have stored in a place which cannot be tampered with. My fathers stored something which produces no fruit, but I have stored something which does produce fruit. My fathers gathered treasures of money, but I have gathered treasures of souls. My fathers gathered for others, but I have gathered for myself. My fathers gathered for this world, but I have gathered for the future world, as it says: 'Thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward' (Is 58:8)." (B.B. 112; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, pp. 52-53.) The anticipation of recompense for the struggles of this life, especially those involving some degree of self-sacrifice, is approved and encouraged by Jesus in words quite similar: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where rust and moth consume, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth consumes, nor thieves break in and steal" (Mt 6:19-20). Again: "Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Mt 19:21).

99. *Git.* 7a-b; cf. *B. Talmud, Gitin*, p. 24.

100. B.B. 9b; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, p. 44.

legs be amputated; may my eyes which had no pity on your eyes become blind and may my whole body be covered with boils." When, the legend continues, all these calamities befell him and he lay in a state too pitiable to be described, his disciples lamented: "Alas that we see you in such a sore plight." He replied, however: "Woe would it be to me, did you not see me in such a sore plight."¹⁰¹

Abiding concern for the welfare of others, symbolized by the *kuppah*, the charity box, is one of the glories of Judaism. From the *kuppah*, alms were distributed to the poor on the day before the Sabbath. A scholar, the Talmud says, should not reside in a city where there are not found, among other things, a court of justice, a charity fund, a synagogue, and public baths.¹⁰² There is nothing haphazard about charity, as taught by the rabbis; nothing is left to chance. To be effective, it must be practical, levelheaded, organized. When it is performed grudgingly or for unworthy motives, this is unfortunate; still, charity must be done, and God will be pleased with at least this minimum.¹⁰³ Concern for the poor has never been allowed to abate. With the exaggeration native to legend, it is told of Rabbi Hana ben Hanilai that he employed sixty cooks by day and sixty by night to minister unto the needy, and that his house had open doors on every side for all comers. His hand was always on his purse so that the beggar would not be embarrassed while the master went looking for change. During lean years his servants used to throw grain out of the windows so that the bashful poor could come by night and take without being observed.¹⁰⁴

101. See Ta'an. 21a; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, pp. 104-105. The principle of urgency is also brought out in this strong saying: "If on a fast day, the distribution of alms is postponed overnight, it is just as though blood were shed." (Sanh. 35a; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, p. 222.) The postponement is culpable only in the case of food that can be eaten right away, for lack of which the needy might die during the night. For the same reason, the superiority of direct charity, of food or clothing, is often stressed in opposition to gifts of money, which must be exchanged for the needed commodities, thus involving a lapse of time that might be fatal.

102. See Sanh. 17b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 89-90.

103. See B.B. 9a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, pp. 41-42.

104. See Ber. 58b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, pp. 363-364. This same concern was exemplified in the way the alphabet was taught to small children; early in life it was impressed on them that every Jew is his brother's keeper. Each of the letters was given a meaning based on the similarity in sound between the name of the letter and some Hebrew word: *alef* and *bet* became *alef binah*, "learn wisdom"; *gimmel dalet* became *gemol dallim*, "show kindness to the poor." The foot of the *gimmel* is stretched towards the *dalet* to indicate how fitting it is for the benevolent to seek out the poor. The face of the *dalet* is secret, to avoid shaming the poor man, and so on. (See Shab. 104a; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, pp. 500-502.)

V

A WORD or two should be said about the exclusiveness of Jewish charity, as found in the Talmud.¹⁰⁵ The pious Jew felt bound to those whom God loved, but under the circumstances that prevailed during the time that much of the Talmud was composed, this bond seemed to exclude his persecutors, particularly the Romans, and to a lesser degree the Persians. The question was not so much whether it was possible for an individual pagan to be saved—the Bible speaks of Enoch, Naaman, and Job, all worshippers of the true God—but whether, in view of the general immorality and idolatry of pagans the God-fearing man had an obligation, in fact, a right to help and thus encourage those who were looked upon as God's avowed enemies. Many of the harsh sayings of the Talmud against non-Jews must be interpreted in their historical context; they were uttered by the leaders of an embattled, persecuted people, of a people surrounded by men not at all sympathetic to monotheism and a divinely revealed moral code. Theirs was an age when even a greeting given to a pagan on the street could be construed as homage to the god whose festival was celebrated that day. On the other hand, a Gentile who formally renounced his idolatry was entitled to receive support from the Jewish community, even though he had not become a proselyte.¹⁰⁶ As I understand it, the evil use to which alms money might have been put was what impeded charity to pagans. When this danger was eliminated, the prohibition presumably ceased.

Without entering into a complete discussion of this delicate problem, it seems possible to establish at least the elements of a solution. According to rabbinical theology, there are outside Israel two classes of men, the heathen and the Noachids. The latter are descendants of Noah, faithful to the seven precepts given the patriarch after the deluge. By avoiding idol worship, blasphemy, bloodshed, adultery, robbery, by establishing courts of justice, and by not eating flesh cut from a living animal, they observe what Catholic theologians call the natural law, and, in so doing, glorify the divine Name according to

105. For a comprehensive treatment of the problem, see "Gentile," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, V, 616–619.

106. See Git. 62a; cf. *B. Talmud, Gitin*, p. 292, and 'A.Z. 65a; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Abodah Zarah*, p. 315. "Formal" renunciation means one in the presence of three *haberim*, "companions" or strict observers of the Torah.

their lights.¹⁰⁷ Hence the rabbis have God say on the Day of Judgment: "I will seek the nations' records, and if they have any meritorious deeds, I will redeem them, but if not, I will destroy them."¹⁰⁸ On the value of kind deeds performed by Gentiles, several rabbis of the talmudic days presume that their charity is sinful because they do it only to glorify themselves or to ensure the continuation of their power or to display their haughtiness or even to reproach the Jews. There are others, however, who hold that deeds of charity are a "sin-offering" as much for the Gentiles as for the people of Israel, that benevolence works the atonement of both.¹⁰⁹

Whenever the rabbis consider the Gentiles excluded from God's love and to be excluded from their own, they do so ultimately on the assumption that the Gentiles failed to respond to divine overtures. God offered them the Noachian laws, but they do not keep them.¹¹⁰ According to rabbinic speculation, He offered them even the Torah, but they would not accept it; only Israel did.¹¹¹ Should a heathen, however, occupy himself seriously with the study of the Torah, he would be equal to the High Priest. This the Talmud sees confirmed by the verse: "You must keep my statutes and ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live by them (Lev 18:5)," for "it does not say 'priests, levites, and Israelites,' but 'a man,' which shows that if even a Gentile occupies himself with the study of the Torah, he equals in status the High Priest."¹¹² How often this situation was realized, or how often the Noachian laws were faithfully fulfilled, is another question. In practice many a hard rabbinical saying was softened in the interests of peace.

To avoid ill-feeling, the poor of the heathen are not to be prevented from gathering gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and the corner of the field. They are to be supported along with the poor of Israel, their sick are to

107. See Sanh. 74b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, p. 505. For the enumeration of the Noachian precepts, see Sanh. 56a; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 381-382; see also "Laws, Noachian," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VII, 648-650.

108. 'A.Z. 4a; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Abodah Zarah*, p. 13.

109. See B.B. 10b; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, pp. 50-51.

110. See 'A.Z. 2b; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Abodah Zarah*, p. 5.

111. See 'A.Z. 2a-b; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Abodah Zarah*, pp. 2-5. The heathen in Palestine, because of their contact with Judaism, were more harshly judged for their failure to abandon idolatry than were those who dwelled in distant lands.

112. B.K. 38a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Kamma*, pp. 214-215; see also Sanh. 59a; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, p. 400, and 'A.Z. 3a; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Abodah Zarah*, p. 5.

be visited along with the sick of Israel, and their poor are to be buried with the poor of Israel, in the interests of peace.¹¹³

If some of the teachers of old maintained that the Gentiles did not enjoy God's love, there was, among others, Rab Judah to compensate for their exclusiveness: "If one walks about in the days of Nisan, that is in spring time, and sees the trees sprouting, he should say: 'Blessed be He who has not left His world lacking in anything and has created in it goodly creatures and goodly trees for the enjoyment of mankind.'" ¹¹⁴ God is praised here because He has made the wonders of His creation the delight, not only of Israelites, but of all the sons of man.

VI

SUCH then are the main teachings of the Talmud on the love of neighbor for the sake of God. If the texts seem at times imbued with a forbidding legalism which has none of the surging spontaneity and abandon we associate with love—many manuals of moral theology, conscious of the human condition, labor under a similar burden of casuistry—this is the natural consequence of Judaism's profound attachment to Torah as a principle of life. The true Christian, the one who lives fully the life of the Spirit and thus experiences the inner freedom of the adopted sons of God, will the more easily perceive the dignity of the Law given to Israel on Mount Sinai. Because the law of the Spirit is engraved in his own heart, he will recognize in three thousand years of passionate determination the fruit of a law and a love written in their hearts:

*Had not your law been my delight,
I should have perished in my affliction.
Never will I forget your precepts,
for through them you give me life.*

(Ps 118[119]:92-93)

113. Git. 61a; cf. *B. Talmud, Giṭṭin*, pp. 286-287; see also Git. 59b; cf. *B. Talmud, Giṭṭin*, p. 278.

114. Ber. 43b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, p. 264.

Edward A. Synan

THE COVENANT OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

NO PAGE of St. Thérèse's *Autobiography* is more likely to distress a reader today than that which parodies her cousin's wedding invitation. In the rites and in the wedding journey, this Carmelite saw a parallel to her own religious profession made a few weeks before: Was she not bound by her vows as spouse of the Anointed? Is not the religious life a kind of wedding journey that endures until the Day of the Lord? Hence the lines that even an admiring biographer has been pained to read:

Almighty God,
The Creator of Heaven and Earth and Ruler of the World,
and The Most Glorious Virgin Mary,
Queen of the Court of Heaven,
Invite you to the Spiritual Marriage
of Their August Son Jesus,
King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
with Little Thérèse Martin,
now Lady and Princess of the Kingdoms of the Childhood and Passion
of Jesus. . . .¹

Surely this passage bears the features of the last century, of a convent in the provinces. Our reservations against its style do not necessarily spring from the fact that we are neither saints nor Carmelites; to realize this, we have but to mention the name of Edith Stein, Carmelite and martyr. Edith Stein could no more have written these words than could St. Thérèse have been the author of that philosophical work, *Endliches und ewiges Sein*. And these words of Thérèse are a far cry

1. Ida F. Goerres, *The Hidden Face* (New York: Pantheon, 1959), p. 249, thus qualifies this passage: "[Thérèse] imitates the wedding invitation of her cousin Jeanne Guérin in a document of blatant teen-age tastelessness."

from the austere and outspoken prophets of Israel! What would Hosea have made of her? What could Ezekiel have said to Lisieux?

THE BIBLE

YET, for all the surface differences, St. Thérèse was expressing in her fashion a theme dear to prophets. Nourished by the liturgy—daily she chanted the psalms, daily she assisted at the eucharistic sacrifice—fully convinced that the love of God demands the surrender of everything to Him, how could she not see in a wedding the image of God's passionate love for us and the privilege of our access to Him?

This is a biblical insight: As husband is to wife, so is Yahweh to His people. The Hebrew prophets did not find this equation too hardy, too daring.² The love of a husband is protective and exclusive: Yahweh is a jealous God (see Ex 20:5; Deut 4:24). The shattering anger of husband betrayed, his raging violence against the faithless partner—where could the prophets have found a better image of the disasters that infidelity to the covenant would bring down upon the nation of the Lord's own choosing? Still, a deceived husband might well be moved to chastise and to pardon a wife he has yearned to welcome back; thus was the Lord accustomed to bear with His people.³ Chosen forever, they remain beloved in spite of every rebellion. His grief and anger are but the measure of His love (see Lev 26:44-45).

In human passion, the prophets found a vocabulary to express the bond of the covenant: marriage, wife, husband, love. Reinforced, we may suppose, by Israel's encounter with the cultic sexuality on the Canaanite high places, sites of alluring heathen worship, the prophets found in the same image a whole range of related terms for disobedience to the Lord's commands, for apostasy, for idolatry. Where the Code of Canon Law speaks soberly of heresy and schism, of superstition and of communication in sacred things, the Bible thunders: prostitute, fornication, adultery, lust.⁴

Hosea has provided the classic place for this analogy (see 1:2-3; 5). All the prophets speak to us of God's mysterious ways and their teach-

2. See Is 61:10; 62:4-5; Ez 16:1-14; Os 1:2-3; 4; also Apoc 21:2, 9.

3. See Is 54:6-10; Jer 3:1-5; Ez 16:60-63; Os 3. For a biblical theology of this, see Jdt 5:5-20.

4. See Lev 20:5; Is 1:21; Jer 2:20; Ez 16:15-63; Jg 2:17; Wis 14:12; also Ez 23; Apoc 2:20-22.

ing is full of symbolic deeds. What is peculiar to Hosea is that this prophet is described as having lived out his own tragic message. For he was husband to a wife as fickle as she was beloved. Two sons and a daughter she had born the prophet; each had to carry a name such as might teach fidelity to Abraham's seed: "Jezreel," the first-born, evoked the threat of massacre and war. The daughter, "Unbeloved," was a living symbol of tribes transported, doomed to exile with no return, condemned to oblivion, to death. "Not-my-people" was the dreadful name of the younger son; what could this mean but rejection by Yahweh of those He had preferred to all the nations of the earth?

Thus the mother of these children, Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, "a woman given to prostitution," was a type of the people in their days of infidelity. Like her, they had forgotten the Giver of oil and wine, their food and drink now perverted to become the price of shame; not a thought did they have for Him who had made the silver and the gold from which they fabricated their deaf, unseeing idols.

More than once the prophets refer to the harsh punishment of a guilty wife: She was driven naked into the rocky wastes. So will the nation that has deceived the love of the Lord become a desert, vines devastated, crops ravaged, all her wicked rituals brought to naught (see Os 2:5; Ez 16:39; Mic 1:8). Then let her seek her paramours: She will not find them. And the day will come—such is the utterance of the Lord—when she will say: "I will return to my first husband, for happier was I then than I am today" (Os 2:9; see also Lk 15:17-20).⁵ With this return, it will be clear that God has not desired the death but the repentance of the sinner. Hosea, faithfully reflecting Yahweh's strong pity, ransomed Gomer for a time of testing and a time of reconciliation. Nor did holy Writ neglect to provide her children with happier names. Jezreel, the first-born, then content with a name that need not connote the dooms of infidelity—for a root may yet be faithful—on that day will hear Yahweh say to his brother: "My people!" and to his sister: "Beloved!"

In this perspective, marriage breaks through the frame of the merely human. Because wedlock is so sacred, the malice that violates its sanctity is a type of man's rebellion against the Holy One. And, the reverse of the same coin, that sacred Scripture has used marriage to

5. Those who heard the parable recounted in the Gospel according to St. Luke must have recalled the parallel in Hosea.

symbolize commitment to God is reason for men to see in the bond between husband and wife an ineffably holy tie.

This does not mean that the scriptural view of marriage is an exclusively solemn one. The Bible is never blind to human hopes and joys; within the imposing landmarks of God's reconquest of His children—smoking mountain and the sea receding—there is room for episodes and themes in a lighter vein. Revelation is conveyed as truly in the tale of Jacob's weary courting and in the melting images of Solomon's Song as in the account of Abraham's thrust into the land of promise. To the believer, nothing human is trivial: Our nature and its every aspiration are the works of His hands. One consequence of this is the place of honor given to the marriage feast in holy Scripture. When Jeremiah must proclaim dire penalties against those who have outraged the covenant, he places the silencing of wedding festivities on the same plane as death, sword, and famine.⁶ Samson's roistering career cries out for every extenuating circumstance that can be found, and none will serve him better than his disenchantment in the very week of nuptial feasting: Then it was that the groomsmen connived with his Philistine bride to wring from him the key to his riddle (see Jg 14:1-20; also 1 Mac 9:34-41).

Never is John the Baptist more clearly of the line of the Hebrew prophets than when he styles himself the friend for whom it is enough to hear the Bridegroom's voice (see Jn 3:29).⁷ Does not the sun serve the psalmist as a figure of Yahweh's benign majesty? Then, in the exultation of his song, the poet finds yet another image in the splendor of a wedding: The glory of the rising sun is like that of a bridegroom coming forth from his nuptial tent (see Ps 18:6; also Apoc 21:2).

THE TALMUD

THE Bible comes to the Jewish believer in a setting of traditional commentary and exposition. Centuries of reflection and discussion have produced a formidable body of authoritative decisions on disputed

6. See Jer 7:34; 16:9; also Jl 2:16; 1 Mac 1:28; Mt 9:15; Mk 2:19; Lk 5:34; Apoc 18:23.

7. The "friends of the bridegroom," the *shoshbin*, have a special status although the rabbis debated to what point this freed them from certain religious obligations difficult to perform during the wedding festivities. (See Suk. 25b; cf. *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein, London: Soncino, 1935-48, *Sukkah*, pp. 110-111.)

points, a minute examination of what is implied by each least formula of the Law. Thus has marriage been the focus of a never-ending meditation and conversation: Here to be garnered is a wealth of shrewd observation and deep piety, of astringent realism and much wit.

But the wisdom of the Talmud is a treasure hopelessly alien to the reader for whom all reasoning must be in the form of syllogism. A talmudic anagram, for instance, proposes this cryptic insight: "Rabbi Akiba expounded: 'When husband and wife are worthy, the Shekinah, the divine Presence, abides with them; when they are not worthy, fire consumes them.'" The Hebrew word for "husband" is formed by the letters *aleph*, *yod*, and *shin*, that for "wife" by *aleph*, *shin*, and *he*, while the letters of the divine Name are *yod* and *he*. Thus Rabbi Akiba could assert the divine Presence wherever husband and wife are as they ought to be. But should those letters that form the divine Name be deleted, nothing will remain of the words "husband" and "wife" but the two letters that spell "fire," *aleph* and *shin*. So it is that, should the divine Presence depart from a marriage, nothing will remain but the fire of passion—the case of a woman being the more evil since, in her name, the letters of "fire" are consecutive, whereas, in that of man, they are separated by the smallest of all letters, *yod*.⁸

Surely not "logical," this anagram conveys a truth, and a profound one. Without forgetting and still less denying our debt to Greek philosophers, we may be excused for making light of their conceptual logic in a world where Yahweh concerns Himself with our very loves. To be able to rejoice in God-with-us, *Emmanuel*, and in the sacred union that the heathen thinks no more than a convenience, such is the authentic Jewish way. And the penalty for transcending the manuals of Greek logic? Is it any more than to lose a glimpse of those distant "gods," self-bemused objects of cosmic desire, begetting (if Aristotle was right) a motion perfect because circular?

Another instance: If, as the Bible often affirms, the Lord is wedded to His people, it is Torah that binds them together. From of old, the Hebrews have known that Torah must be to them as beloved and as straitly guarded as is a chosen bride. This biblical likening of marriage to the Covenant of Sinai loses nothing at the hands of the talmudic masters. Thus Deuteronomy recounts that God gave Israel a law, making the community of Jacob His inheritance (see 33:4), and the

8. See *Soṭ. 17a*; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, p. 89, n. 3, 4, and 5.

Talmud insists that in these words, not only is one truth stated, but still another is concealed. The word for "inheritance," *morashah*, reminds the rabbis of the word *me'orasah*, "betrothed," and a new truth springs from the text: Torah is the betrothed of all Israel.⁹

THE RABBIS ON MARRIAGE

In Jewish tradition, marriage is inseparable from the divine intention in creating man. An unmarried man is considered incomplete. "Rabbi Eleazar said: Any man who has no wife is no proper man; for it is said, 'Male and female created He them and called *their* name Adam.'"¹⁰ No wonder, then, that the life of the unmarried is joyless, lonely, open to disquietude; a truncated existence, it is a bootless attempt to ignore what God has made of man. "Rabbi Tanhum stated in the name of Rabbi Hanilai: 'Any man who has not a wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness.'"¹¹ This terse pronouncement is the starting point of a discussion that weaves together fragments of Scripture with disconcerting virtuosity. The phrase "without joy" brings to mind the line of Deuteronomy: "And thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy house" (14:26) because, so these sages assure us, "house" refers to one's wife. From this it is an easy step to assert that the words "without blessing" invoke a line of Ezekiel: "To cause a blessing to rest on thy house" (44:30), and the words "without goodness" echo Genesis: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18).

Nor is this the end. For scholars who lived in Babylon, Palestine counted as the west and there, we are told, the unmarried man was described by yet another architectural image: He is "without Torah and without a wall." For what is Torah but a man's help, and is it not as her husband's helpmeet that Genesis qualifies a wife? She is a wall because she protects: "A woman," said Jeremiah, "shall encompass a man" (31:22). This is enough for the rabbis to see in the man as yet unmarried a man defenseless: He lacks the protecting wall that only a good wife can be. Even Job, connoisseur of disaster, has made his contribution: "And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace; and thou

9. See Pes. 49b; cf. *B. Talmud, Pesahim*, p. 237.

10. Yeb. 63a; cf. *B. Talmud, Yebamoth*, p. 419. It is *together* that husband and wife merit the name *Adam*, i.e., man in the deepest sense: Alone, neither is quite human. The scriptural reference is Gen 5:2.

11. Yeb. 62b; cf. *B. Talmud, Yebamoth*, p. 418.

shalt visit thy habitation and shalt miss nothing" (5:24). He said "tent" but, according to the Talmud, he meant "wife": The only guarantee of peaceful possession is a faithful and valiant woman!

No Hebrew sage can doubt that marriage is heaven's concern, and there were some who thought it right to maintain that every Jewish marriage is truly "made in heaven." True enough, there were also some to deny it; thus Rabbi ben Bar Hannah is reported to have said that "to effect a union between man and woman is as difficult as the dividing of the Red Sea." But the Talmud can adduce another opinion roundly denying that it is in any sense difficult. "Rabbi Judah said in Rab's name that forty days before the embryo is formed, a heavenly voice goes forth and says: 'The daughter of so and so for so and so.'" Thus is the predestined character of marriage proclaimed—the partners are allotted to each other before they have been conceived; it is heaven's work, "what is the difficulty?"¹²

For all its heavenly aspect, marriage has many an earthly advantage to recommend it. No wealth can be compared to a worthy wife. Rabbi Meir held that the wealthy man is the one who has pleasure in his wealth but Rabbi Akiba that it is the one who has "a wife comely in deeds."¹³ The death of such a wife is a crushing sorrow, and the talmudic masters multiply their similes to convey the widower's desolation: He is grieved as much "as if the destruction of the Temple had taken place in his days"; "the world is darkened"; "his steps grow short"; "his wits collapse."¹⁴ Even her most humble household tasks make a man's wife dear to him. He may fill his house with wheat, she is the one who prepares it for the table; it is not raw flax, his growing, but the fruit of her spinning and sewing that he wears. Truly she is the "help" of Genesis, she brings "light to his eyes and puts him on his feet!"¹⁵ Indeed, it is not too much to say that the man who lacks a suitable wife lacks everything. When Scripture threatens impoverishment and slavery as punishment for abandoning the Law, the rabbis know how to gloss the text from just this point of view. Commenting on the divine threat to a disobedient Israel: "And thou shalt serve thine enemy . . . in want of all things" (Deut 28:48), Rabbi Ammi said that to be "in want of all things" meant with neither lamp nor

12. Sanh. 22a; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, p. 124.

13. Shab. 25b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 112.

14. Sanh. 22a; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 123-124.

15. See Yeb. 63a; cf. *B. Talmud, Yebamoth*, p. 420.

table, but Rabbi Hisda declared that it meant to be without a wife.¹⁶

It is with a view to marriage that a man labors in this world, lest it be the wasteland that the command of Genesis—to increase and multiply—was given to prevent (see 1:28).¹⁷ From this destiny no disaster will dissuade the pious. The defeats of the Jews by the Romans in 70 and 135 might have made the task of survival seem a hopeless one. In spite of everything, a master of those times, who knew how disheartening the prospect was, ironically gave his approval to the unending, patient struggle:

Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha said: Since the day of the destruction of the Temple we should by rights bind ourselves not to eat meat nor drink wine, only we do not lay a hardship on the community unless the majority can endure it. And from the day that a government has come into power which issues cruel decrees against us and forbids to us the observance of the Torah and the precepts and does not allow us to enter into the "week of the son," we ought by rights to bind ourselves not to marry and beget children, and the seed of Abraham our father would come to an end of itself. However, let Israel go their way: It is better that they should err in ignorance than presumptuously.¹⁸

Thus each Jew is urged to the establishment of his house; planting and building and betrothing are a holy labor for, in the end, it is through these that Jewish living is made possible.

The greatest blessing in a Jewish marriage is the birth of children, and so it is that in guarding and supporting wife and children the pious man assures his own peace. The biblical blessing: "And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt miss nothing" (Job 5:24), is applied to such a man, one "who loves his wife as himself and honors her more than himself, and leads his children in the right path, and marries them off just before

16. See Ned. 41a; cf. *B. Talmud, Nedarim*, p. 129.

17. It is a commonplace of rabbinical literature that this is the very first command given man and that it is thus obvious the Lord did not intend the earth to be a desert, empty of men. (See Meg. 27a; cf. *B. Talmud, Megillah*, p. 162; see also Is 45:18.)

18. B.B. 60b; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, p. 246. The destruction of the Temple was the overwhelming catastrophe of the year 70, whereas the government of the cruel decrees is that of the Hadrianic persecution associated with the revolt of Bar Kochba when neither the Sinaitic Law nor the traditional rabbinic legislation could be fulfilled.

they attain puberty." So too the rabbis list the acts of charity characteristic of the man to whom the Scripture can be applied: "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer" (Is 58:9). He "loves his neighbor, displays friendly intimacy towards his relatives, and marries off his sister's daughter and lends to the poor man in time of his need."¹⁹

These realistic men were not blind to the tensions of family life and to the friction inevitable between even the best of fathers and sons. A rabbinical anecdote well illustrates the popular saying that "a father's love is for his children but the children's love is for their own children":

Rabbi Huna once found a juicy date which he took and wrapped in his mantle. His son, Rabbah, came and said to him: "I smell the fragrance of a juicy date." He said to him: "My son, there is purity in thee," and gave it to him. Meanwhile Rabbah's son, Abba, came; Rabbah took it and gave it to him. Rabbi Huna said to Rabbah: "My son, thou hast gladdened my heart and blunted my teeth."²⁰

The realism of the sages included a primitive eugenics in the counsels they gave to men looking for suitable wives. They recommended that the character of a woman's brothers be scrutinized, for, they think they have observed, children tend to resemble their maternal uncles.²¹ Two abnormally tall persons ought not marry lest they beget a breed of giants, nor two abnormally short ones because their children may be tiny. A pale man is ill-advised to marry a pale woman, and a swarthy man one whose complexion is the same as his; their offspring might be of leprous pallor in the first case and in the second, excessively dark.²² Even the motivation of the man seeking a wife is important; the Lord, searcher of hearts and reins, will hardly bless a union planned for self-seeking reasons. To marry for the sake of money, for example, will mean unworthy children.²³

MARRIAGE AND THE STUDY OF TORAH

The rabbis show a love of sacred study that reminds us of those Greek philosophers who located the perfection of man in the contemplation

19. Sanh. 76b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 517-518.

20. *Soṭ.* 49a; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, p. 264.

21. See *B.B.* 110a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Bathra*, pp. 454-455.

22. See *Bek.* 45b; cf. *B. Talmud, Bekoroth*, pp. 310-311.

23. See *Kid.* 70a; cf. *B. Talmud, Kiddushin*, p. 354.

of truth, and also of Christian theologians who give the highest honor to prayerful contemplation. This love of study has meant that the masters of the Law must solve conflicts between the practical duties of the married man and his obligation to meditate on the sacred texts, for both marriage and study have real claims upon him. Both are so holy that to make either one possible would justify that last of all devices, the sale of a copy of the Torah. "Rabbi Johanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: A man should not sell a *sefer torah* save in order to study the Torah and to marry a wife."²⁴ Which holds the first place? Since both marriage and study are universally binding, only a chronological priority is at stake. There are some who give the first place to marriage because a fruitful study of the Law is one "in purity," which means that he ought first to marry a woman and afterwards study the Torah.²⁵ For how else could the young scholar, victim of the passions that are the bane of the unmarried, come to his studies with the tranquillity they demand?

This opinion, however, is not a unanimous one, and here as elsewhere the Talmud makes it possible for us to witness the cut and parry of the duel. If it is generally true that one should first study and then marry, this order should be reversed for one who cannot live without a wife. Not so, rejoined Rabbi Johanan, speaking out roundly in a way hardly calculated to please wives: "With a millstone around the neck, shall one study the Torah?" What, then, of the rabbinical student from Babylon who travels to Palestine to make his studies? For him, a wife safely at home in Babylon will be no millstone, whereas his confreres, natives of Palestine, are in different case, "studying at home and bearing family responsibilities, they could make no progress if married, and so they are bound to study first."²⁶

Still another correlation between marriage and the study of Torah is the consideration that a shrewd marriage can promote sacred learning. If a man marries the right woman he has every reason to hope that his children will carry on this duty: "Let a man always sell all he has and marry the daughter of a scholar, for if he dies or goes into exile, he is assured that his children will be scholars. But let him not marry the daughter of an *am ha-'arez*, a man ignorant of the Law, for if he dies

24. Meg. 27a; cf. *B. Talmud, Megillah*, p. 162.

25. See Yom. 72b; cf. *B. Talmud, Yoma*, p. 348; also Men. 110a; cf. *B. Talmud, Menahoth*, pp. 679-680.

26. *Kid.* 29b; cf. *B. Talmud, Kiddushin*, pp. 141-142 and n. 1, p. 142.

or goes into exile, his children will be *ammei ha'arez*, people ignorant of the Law."²⁷

The same considerations should guide the father of a marriageable daughter in choosing a husband for her. It is true that the study of Torah is not for women, but women are the mothers and the wives of scholars and thus they share vicariously in the glory of erudition.²⁸ "Rabbi Hiyya ben Abba said in the name of Rabbi Johanan: All the prophets prophesied only on behalf of one who gives his daughter in marriage to a scholar and who conducts business on behalf of a scholar and who allows a scholar the use of his possessions."²⁹ Help given a student of Torah, especially in the form of a wife who will be his help and defense, brings the benefactor close to the Lord. "Is it possible for a human being to 'cleave' unto the divine Presence?" Yes, the rabbis answer: "Any man who marries his daughter to a scholar, or carries on a trade for scholars, or benefits scholars from his estate is regarded by Scripture as if he had cleaved to the divine Presence."³⁰

HUMAN FRAILTY

To think rabbinical esteem for marriage and for the ideal wife has masked the faults and limitations that men are fond of ascribing to women would be an error. On the contrary, the rabbis have some severe things to say about the whole sex, although the antifeminist bias is often enough expressed with a wry humor that blunts its edge. The unsympathetic wife has her place in the pages of Talmud:

Rab was constantly tormented by his wife. If he told her: "Prepare me lentils," she would prepare him small peas; if he asked for small peas, she prepared him lentils. When his son Hiyya grew up he gave her his father's instructions in the reverse order. "Your mother," Rab once remarked to him, "has improved!" "It was I," the other replied, "who reversed your orders to her."³¹

27. Pes. 49a; cf. *B. Talmud, Pesahim*, pp. 235-236.

28. Rabina, for instance, teaches that women, even though they have no obligation to study, may partake of the merit of the study of Torah: "... granted that women are not so commanded, still when they have their sons taught Scripture and Mishnah and wait for their husbands until they return from the Schools, should they not share the merit with them?" (Sot. 21a; cf. *B. Talmud, Soṭah*, p. 107.)

29. Ber. 34b; cf. *B. Talmud, Berakoth*, pp. 214-215.

30. Ket. 111b; cf. *B. Talmud, Kethuboth*, p. 720.

31. Yeb. 63a; cf. *B. Talmud, Yebamoth*, p. 422.

There then is the universal indictment: "Ten measures of gossip descended to the world: nine were taken by women."³² A man must be on his guard with women for many reasons, and one is that they so easily find a pretext for his attention. Those who are beautiful have this for their cry: "Set your eyes on beauty, for the quality most to be prized in women is beauty." Those of noble birth use another gambit: "Look for family, for woman has been created to bring up a family."³³

Thus it is no surprise to read that the birth of a daughter is not necessarily greeted with joy. The father deserves what consolation his friends can contrive to give him and it is odd to find the Jewish sages clutching at what is no more than a straw: The world, after all, cannot do without women! This is indubitably true, and the philosophers of Greece have not failed to make the point,³⁴ but it is disappointing to find rabbinic wisdom here no more profound than that of pagans:

A daughter was born to Rabbi Simeon the son of Rabbi Judah Hanasi, and he felt disappointed. His father said to him: Increase has come to the world. Bar Kappara said to him: Your father has given you an empty consolation. The world cannot do without either males or females. Yet happy is he whose children are males, and alas for him whose children are females. The world cannot do without either a spice-seller or a tanner. Yet happy is he whose occupation is that of a spice-seller, and alas for him whose occupation is that of a tanner.³⁵

This is the world in which the manual of daily prayers can provide men with a formula to express their gratitude each morning that they have been created "neither slaves nor heathens nor women." For women, the same source provides what Bar Kappara, I fear, would call "empty

32. This sentence is part of a long passage in which the rabbis maintain that ten measures of wisdom descended to the world, and nine were taken by Palestine; likewise of the ten measures of beauty, nine were Jerusalem's endowment; and while of the ten measures of wealth, nine fell into the hands of the early Romans, of the ten measures of strength, nine stayed with the Persians; of the ten measures of witchcraft, nine made their home in Egypt—and so on. (See *Kid.* 49b; cf. *B. Talmud, Kiddushin*, p. 249.)

33. *Ta'an.* 31a; cf. *B. Talmud, Ta'anith*, p. 164.

34. See Plato, *Laws*, 6.781; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.13; 1260b, 18.

35. *B.B.* 16b; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Batra*, p. 83. So offensive were the materials of the tanner's trade that there were rabbis to assert a woman's right to require a bill of divorce from a husband unwilling to abandon it; its contrast, therefore, to that of spice-seller needs no commentary.

consolation"; they are bidden to thank the Creator who has made them to be what they are.³⁶

If these be the values, marriage must surely ennoble women. Still, we shall be wise not to press to the letter a text in which one master likens the benign influence of a husband on his wife to the Lord's rescuing power over desolate Zion: "Rabbi Samuel ben Unya said in the name of Rab: A woman before marriage is a shapeless lump, and concludes a covenant only with him who transforms her into a useful vessel, as it is written: 'For thy maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is His name.'"³⁷ And yet, kindness towards one's wife, no matter what her faults, is a constant theme of Talmud. "One should always be heedful of wronging his wife," said Rab, "for since her tears are frequent she is quickly hurt."³⁸ This is the more significant because it was also Rab who stated that "he who follows his wife's counsel will descend into Gehenna" and thereby provided his fellows with grist for the mill of their debates. Rabbi Papa, for example, countered with the generally accepted saying: "If your wife is short, bend down and hear her whisper!" What can this mean if not that her counsel is worth seeking? Two solutions to the puzzle are offered. The first remark is said to bear on general matters, the other on household affairs; as to the former, she has no competence, but on the latter, she should be heard. The other solution is that the first opinion refers to religious matters, a male preserve, and the second to secular questions.³⁹ But in spite of a certain rigor in expression, the superiority attributed to men is yoked with a compensating responsibility. It is according to the pattern of divine generosity that a husband and father is shown his duty:

A man should always eat and drink less than his means allow, clothe himself in accordance with his means, and honor his wife and children more than his means allow, for they are dependent upon him and he is dependent upon "Him who spake and the world came into being."⁴⁰

36. See *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, trans. and ed. J. H. Hertz (New York: Bloch, 1952), pp. 19, 21.

37. Sanh. 22b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 124-125. The scriptural reference is to Is 54:5.

38. B.M. 59a; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Mezi'a*, p. 350.

39. See *ibid.*, p. 351.

40. Hul. 84b; cf. *B. Talmud, Hulin*, p. 473.

Can it be that these doctors of the Law who are so outspoken about the faults of women, have missed the faults of men? To pose the question thus bluntly is almost to give it an answer; in any case, the Talmud is not silent on male weakness. Indeed, if marriage is the perfection of a man, it is also a safeguard his frailty demands. Rabbi Johanan, we are told, listed three things as so exceptional that they merit a daily proclamation from the vault of heaven: "A bachelor who lives in a large town without sinning, a poor man who returns lost property to its owner, and a wealthy man who tithes his produce in secret."⁴¹ The mode of expression may be marked by oriental indirection, but the appraisal of human weakness is realistic, not to say cynical.

DIVORCE

An instability, neither male nor female but simply human, raises the delicate question of divorce. No doubt, both Bible and Talmud present marital fidelity as an ideal within the reach of men and women. It is also true that the Hebrew Scriptures are willing to relax, on occasion, the irrevocable commitment this implies. Hence Jesus found it necessary to preface His own words on the subject with a candid acknowledgment of their radical character. Moses had indeed allowed a bill of divorce, but, in the new dispensation, this would count as a compromise (see Mt 19:9).

The question of divorce cannot be explored apart from the evidence Jewish marriage presents of a progressive purification. Idle to pretend that Abraham did not bring to the land promised him a domestic morality immeasurably superior to that of the Cities of the Plain. But it would be just as idle to pretend that the Jews of our day have not been faithful to the patriarchs, century by century, precisely by surpassing their standards. In any case, rabbinical wisdom treats divorce as a disaster, a disaster at times unavoidable to be sure, but a disaster for all that. "If a man divorces his first wife," Rabbi Eleazar said, "even the altar sheds tears."⁴² This tragic solution cannot be invoked in response to an unconfirmed rumor of evil-doing; only the corroborated testimony demanded by Scripture will justify the drawing up of a *get*, the bill of divorce.⁴³ On the other hand, to divorce a truly bad wife

41. Pes. 113a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Pesahim*, p. 582.

42. Git. 90b; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Gittin*, p. 439.

43. See Ket. 36b; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Kethuboth*, p. 198.

might be a duty. Even then it might be that the *ketubah*, the "marriage document," settles so large a sum on the wife that the husband cannot afford to raise it and dismiss her, or there may be children whose welfare takes precedence over the normal course of the law.⁴⁴

The mention of the "marriage document" introduces a rabbinical device to restrict the incidence of divorce. "The rabbis hold the view," says a talmudic text, "that the only reason why the rabbis instituted a *ketubah* for a wife was in order that the man might not find it easy to divorce her."⁴⁵ As maintained to this day in the rite of marriage, the document stipulates in archaic coinage a greater sum to be set aside for the bride if she be a maiden and a lesser one if she be widowed or a divorcée; it makes mention of the dowry she brings and of the fact that the groom must match it. His witnessed signature to the document binds him and his heirs to pay her that sum, should he find it necessary to divorce her. In our day, naturally, the *ketubah* has no more than a symbolic import, but the reality it symbolizes is the Jewish reluctance to accept in practice what is permitted in theory. That the sorry necessity, as Hebrew tradition sees it, does arise is witness to our baseness: "There are many unrestrained men."⁴⁶

This aspect of Jewish marriage is perhaps not so far from the spirit of Canon Law as might appear at first sight. Neither in theory nor in practice can the Church approve divorce, but the havoc wrought by "unrestrained men" is by no means beyond the ken of her legislation. The separation, without the right to remarry, and the legal disposition of common property sanctioned by a Church court, must be seen as one possible development of the ancient rabbis' effort to root so holy a growth in the rocky soil of human hearts. There were reasons, even where the Law of Moses ran, for the bill of divorce, but "it was not so from the beginning" (Mt 19:8).

MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY

In exalting the married state, the Talmud is certainly faithful to Scripture. Indeed, if we add the precision that marriage is the best way for nearly all believers to glorify God, the Christian Scriptures tell us nothing else. There marriage and celibacy are seen as two ways of holiness. The married, in the ecstasy of passion and in the gentle heal-

44. See 'Er. 41b; cf. *B. Talmud*, 'Erubin, p. 287.

45. Ket. 39b; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Kethuboth*, p. 221.

46. See note 43.

ing of their solitude, reflect the burgeoning fecundity of God. Freely do they call up new worlds in their children; through them does the Father work until now (see Jn 5:17). But celibates use their freedom to return undiminished this precious gift. The Bible⁴⁷ can tell us that it is neither the poorest of the flock, nor all the flock, that is marked out for the altar! St. Paul extols marriage (see Eph 5:22-23) and, although he fully esteemed celibacy in the apostolic life (see 1 Cor 7:25-40), he knew well that for the majority marriage is the way to God. St. Thomas More, whose head would fall for conscience' sake, twice chose to marry; in spite of his attraction to the priesthood, he could not give up his longing for a wife.⁴⁸ In the crisp idiom of St. Paul: "Better to marry than to burn" (1 Cor 7:9). Proclaiming a new vision of life, where human love is made a holocaust for the interests of the kingdom, Jesus invites only those who can bear this burden to shoulder it (see Mt 19:12).

The dissent between Jews and Catholics on celibacy is a gap beyond bridging only if the talmudic esteem for marriage be given a scope so rigidly universal as to be redolent of hellenistic rationalism, rather than of the infinitely varying, delicately shaded, and always developing wisdom of the Jews. For how can Jewish thought and life be condemned to the immobility of the dead? No one knows better than rabbinical scholars that to solve moral problems is to cherish values, apparently in opposition, that cannot be preserved without understanding and patient ingenuity. They are unwilling to make their work easy by the brutal suppression of one alternative. Just because they know that the eternally valid revelation of God can daily be better understood by men, applied more creatively, more faithfully lived, Jewish masters never cease to find problems that demand the confrontation and adjustment of competing solutions.

With this goes the recognition that works of human intelligence are always susceptible of improvement. The Law of the Lord is divine, but we understand it as we can. Small reverence would sons pay their fathers' work should the fathers' achievements be judged incapable of bearing the weight of new and loftier structures! Although it sprang

47. See Ex 12:5; Lev 1:2-4; Num 6:10-17; Deut 12:11-28.

48. It is his friend Erasmus who is our witness on the point: "Nor was there any obstacle to his enlisting in that state of life except that he could not shake off his longing for a wife." (Percy S. and Helen M. Allen, *Opus Epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1922, IV, 18.)

from an uncompromising devotion to the covenant, King David's desert ethic of punitive raids would rightly horrify the professors of moral science in our Jewish seminaries today. No Jew feels that he is betraying David's simple faith when he rejects David's equally simple expression of it in massacre and rapine. Does this not justify the view that what the Bible counts as praiseworthy in men of that day—direct as children, but as awkward too—need not always be transported without change into our world? The man who so esteems marriage that he consecrates to the Lord his right to human love is as faithful to Scripture as the soldier who faces an attack with David's courage, but will not stain his hands with a prisoner's blood. The Bible is generous with words of praise for wedded holiness, and not a syllable would we wish to strike out. On the other hand, this cannot mean that our ethical insights ought to be frozen in the state they reached with prophets who never ceased to set new goals for God's people. For celibacy is a sacrifice that springs from a joyous surge towards God.⁴⁹

Asceticism is familiar to scholars who willingly devote the energies of a lifetime to the loving meditation of sacred texts. More than sages, or perhaps because they are truly wise, there are always masters of the Law who cherish to the death their steadfast faith against Hellenizer and Nazi. Without venturing to trespass on a family dispute, might we not see the division of American Judaism into the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox branches as the result of soul searchings to determine what degree of abnegation, even of that which does not at all defile, may be required or desirable to "strengthen the faith"? For it is thus that the Church sees marriage and apostolic celibacy: not a choice between weakness and strength, but a benediction offered by the hand of the Creator, to be received with holy gratitude by the married or sacrificed by the celibate with austere joy.

49. Lest my argument in favor of celibacy be misunderstood, I should like to make clear that it does not equate marriage with massacre—God forbid! My point is simply the possibility of moral advance. As under the impact of the prophetic message, and even more so under that of the gospel—without forgetting the influence of Western thinkers—we have developed, or rather begun to develop, a morality of international relations, so under the impact of the same Gospel, we have arrived at an appreciation of sex that sees its dignity not denied but affirmed, not annulled but enhanced by its sacrifice upon the altar of God. It cannot be stressed enough that, far from being an eclipse of the hallowed state of matrimony, celibacy permits the sun to pour its full light upon it. On the problem of moral advance see Raïssa Maritain, "Abraham and the Ascent of Conscience," *The Bridge*, I, 23-52.

THE PRAYER BOOK

MEALS, marriage, sickness, death: These elemental events are the material of the *siddur*, the manual of Jewish daily prayers.⁵⁰ Thoroughly of this world as these critical experiences are, each one has meaning for "the world to come." The opening chapters of Genesis have already made it clear that the food man wrests from resisting soil, his fruitful union with the companion God has been pleased to provide, his descent down the decades—so few!—to dust and tomb, all mysteries that exercise Hebrew wisdom, are human burdens profoundly related to creation and to the messianic hope. "You can tell from a man's prayers," said a talmudic master, "whether he be a man of religious culture, or a man of no spiritual breeding."⁵¹

The subtle spiritual formation offered in the *siddur* may not disappoint us, but it does hold some surprises. One example of this is that at the solemn ceremony of circumcision, the bystanders respond to the father's blessing of his son by reciting this threefold prayer: "Even as this child has entered into the Covenant, so may he enter into the Torah, the nuptial canopy, and into good deeds."⁵² No casual formula this; a little later the *mobel*, "the circumcisor," will echo the same three hopes.⁵³ So too, on the occasion of the redemption of the first-born male, *pidyon ha-ben*, the desire of the community that these fruits might ennoble the pilgrimage the child is beginning will be voiced in identical terms.⁵⁴ That the infant grow up to perform good deeds and to be faithful to the Law, these are aspirations that might have been expected, but that the far-off nuptial canopy should already be in view is a first, unmistakable trace of the way Jewish wedlock dominates Jewish life.

50. See *Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Hertz. A convenient edition of the marriage service with translation and notes, *Order of the Jewish Marriage Service*, ed. Immanuel Jakobovits (New York: Bloch, 1959), can be consulted.

51. *Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Hertz, p. x.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 1027.

53. See *ibid.*, p. 1029.

54. In memory of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, when her first-born sons were spared, every first-born son, man or beast, was to be consecrated to the Lord—so the Law demanded (see Ex 13:2, 11–15). God, to whom all things belong, claimed them particularly as His own and demanded their special service. Yet since the divine service had become the function of the tribe of Levi, the Law afforded the opportunity of acknowledging God's sovereignty and graciousness through an offering of five shekels, to be given to a priest. Today the gift varies according to the means of the parents or the custom of the congregation. (See *Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Hertz, p. 1037; also Shab. 137b; cf. *B. Talmud, Shabbath*, p. 692.)

Our first impression of the statutory marriage service is its brevity. Expansions that certainly reflect the contact of Israel with other communities have become customary, but despite these expansions the rites remain sober and austere. The first of these is the chanting of a few verses chosen from Psalm 117 [118] and a medieval wedding hymn: "He who is mighty, blessed and great above all beings, may He bless the bridegroom and the bride." Here too the celebrant may pronounce a special prayer or deliver an address appropriate to the occasion and finally—for this, too, is an optional expansion of the essential rites—the contracting parties may express their consent in an explicit formula. Perhaps the best way to understand this state of affairs is to recognize that the very presence of the couple in these circumstances is sufficient evidence of their intention to undertake the obligations of wedlock.⁵⁵

The traditional "shape" of Jewish marriage liturgy is that of two steps. The first, *erusin*, is designated by the beautiful term *kiddushin*, "the hallowings," "the sanctifications"; to a point it corresponds to our Western notion of betrothal. But the parallel is not perfect. Even in ancient times, when months and even a year might separate the hallowings from the completion of the rites, Jewish law gave every effect of marriage, except that of the common roof, to this first stage. Since medieval times, it has been customary to join in one ceremony the first stage with the second. *Nissu'in*, the second step, receives the name, *huppah*, from the canopy under which the whole ceremony takes place.⁵⁶ This is a ritual representation of the festive wedding booth, the *sukkah* of ancient days, built with joy as the first common dwelling of the newly wedded pair.⁵⁷ It is generally an awning of white silk or satin, supported on four staffs and decorated with embroidery, leaves, and flowers; it may even be formed of the curtain of the Ark of the Law, thus "roofing with sanctity" the spot where groom and bride undertake the joys and the charges of this holy alliance.⁵⁸

55. See *Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Hertz, p. 1009, remarks by the editor.

56. See Sanh. 50a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Sanhedrin*, p. 333, n. 3; also "Marriage," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VIII, 349.

57. See Kid. 34a; cf. *B. Talmud*, *Kiddushin*, p. 168; also Meg. 5b; *B. Talmud*, *Megillah*, p. 25.

58. See William O. E. Oesterley and George H. Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue* (2nd rev. ed.; London: Pitman, 1907), pp. 312, 314, 315; Israel Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* (New York: Meridian, 1958), pp. 177, 193, 200.

The hallowings consist of a benediction pronounced over a cup of wine:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who createst the fruit of the vine. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by thy commandments, and has given us command concerning forbidden marriages; who has prohibited unto us those that are betrothed, but who has sanctioned unto us such as are wedded by the rite of the canopy and the sacred covenant of wedlock. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who sanctifiest thy people Israel by the rite of the canopy and the sacred covenant of wedlock.⁵⁹

Two themes are enshrined in this blessing. The betrothed, because their state is holy, and the pagans, because their state is unholy, are both "forbidden" to the believer who seeks a wife. Second, far from being merely tolerated, a lawful marriage is a positive blessing. Thus it is right to call marriage a "sacred covenant." In drinking from one common cup of benediction, bridegroom and bride ritually signify their life henceforth to be shared.

The "rite of the canopy" is constituted today by the gesture and the words of the groom: As he puts a ring on the forefinger of his bride's right hand he recites in Hebrew: "Behold, thou art consecrated unto me by this ring, according to the Law of Moses and of Israel."

"Consecrated unto me" echoes the sanctifications of the betrothal blessing and evokes the Hebrew conception of the "holy" in its deepest meaning. Like the vessels sacred to the Temple service, separated as they were under pain of sacrilege from every profane use, the bride is now set apart by a religious ordinance. To all men but her husband, she is a garden walled off: Thus is she "holy" to them. Equally sacred is her dedication to her husband, and thus she becomes the focus of his religious concern. In a way parallel to Torah, in a way parallel to the works of the Law that are his life-long obligation, the woman who stands beneath the nuptial canopy with him is "holy" in his eyes.

"According to the Law of Moses and of Israel" evokes the ancient Covenant of Sinai: Both Moses, messenger of the Law, and Israel, the people into whose life fidelity to the Law is intimately woven, have a

59. *The Order of the Jewish Marriage Service*, ed. Jakobovits, pp. 13, 15.

stake in every Jewish union. To survive, not only as men, but to survive as sons of those who stood at Sinai is at once the fulfillment of the command to increase and multiply that accompanied creation and the assurance of the future which, for every believing Jew, must be a messianic future.

It is not the Jewish way to shrink from the harsh realities of life. Hence the *ketubah*, the marriage document, is appointed to be read immediately after this solemn commitment by the groom, an echo of the ancient rabbis' hopes that Jewish marriage might be as stable and as faithful as the bond that ties God to His people.

Seven talmudic blessings follow to conclude the ceremony and, once more, to evoke the great themes of creation and the Jewish hope. The first of these is praise of God over a cup of wine: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who createst the fruit of the vine." A second and a third blessing praise God as Creator, the beneficent Maker of all things, to be sure, but in particular the Creator of man. A fourth recalls that man has been created in the very image and likeness of the Lord, endowed with the assurance of future generations. A fifth blessing makes this more concrete: May this couple rejoice in children and so give joy to that Zion which, acquainted with the trials of the barren, might thus have reason to exult. A sixth benediction implores heaven for the happiness of Eden in the marriage; for the Christian reader, this inevitably connotes the primeval innocence, goal of messianic renewal. The seventh ecstatically hymns the glory of God, Creator as He is of every joy and of every pleasure, benign Source and Giver of peace, Creator of all beings, of this groom and of this bride: May the song and jubilation of bridegrooms beneath their canopies be heard, may the voices of young men resound at their banquets! In all things is the Lord to be praised: Has He not made the bridegroom to rejoice with the bride?

Then a dramatic shock: Suddenly the groom shatters a glass beneath his foot. In former times this gesture must have given an even more ominous impression: In the Middle Ages, the glass was dashed against the north wall, perhaps because it was from that direction the invader of the land of Israel so often came. This sign is interpreted now as a dolorous reminder, in the midst of all the wedding joy, of the destruction of Jerusalem or, another explanation, as a symbol of the

fragility of domestic holiness.⁶⁰ The home will no more endure even one infidelity than does the glass a crushing heel!

Jewish marriage is thus a crossroads where the believer must encounter God. The heavenly and the eternal give meaning to the passing and the earthly; each family, like Sinai, is a focus of covenanting. Profoundly concrete as it is, biblical Hebrew knows no abstract term for "marriage"; this tongue can but tell that Isaac led Rebekah into the tent and took her and she became his wife (see Gen 24:67). "Took," a verb that serves as well to recount the purchase of land, is not too mercantile: The bride is sanctified in that bargaining. Has the Church not called the very work of our redemption *admirabile commercium*, an astounding barter?

60. See remarks of the editor in *Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Hertz, p. 1014; Oesterley and Box, *op. cit.*, p. 315; Abrahams, *op. cit.*, p. 208. Rabbi Jakobovits, in the brochure just cited, admonishes his Jewish readers that the breaking of the glass "recalls the 'wreckage' of our past glory. When two individuals have been forged into a single unit, we should remember the values and the shrines that are still 'broken' and in ruins." Obviously annoyed by the frequent interpretation of this custom as a token of a happy future, he insists: ". . . the popular notion that this practice is meant to 'bring luck' offends against the rational character of Judaism which knows no superstitions. Good fortune, we believe, comes to those who work for, and deserve, it; it cannot be secured by breaking a glass!" (*Op. cit.*, p. 9, n. 12.)

Paul van K. Thomson

THE TRAGEDY OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION

THE tangled and controverted history of inquisitorial tribunals, both Catholic and Protestant, carries one into the realm of tragedy. The figure of Edmund Campion mounting the scaffold in Elizabethan England, the image of Servetus bound to the stake in Calvin's Geneva, the tormented bodies of the six men and women burned at the first auto-da-fé in Seville—these and other victims haunt the imagination long after the scholarly debate that surrounds them has been recorded.

Among the great writers of the West, none has understood this tragic aspect of history as well as Fëdor Dostoyevsky. The imaginary Inquisitor in the well-known chapter of his novel *The Brothers Karamazov* is a figure at once horrifying and pitiable. In this fantasy, Jesus comes to Seville at the peak of the inquisitorial terror. He blesses the suffering, He gives sight to the blind, He raises the dead. No sooner has the aged Grand Inquisitor seen Jesus, than he confines Him to the dungeon. There, the old man explains to the silent Christ that for the good of the weak, vacillating, ignorant masses it has been necessary to "correct" His answers to the temptations of Satan, when He rejected temporal power, refused to turn stones into bread, or leap unhurt from the pinnacle of the Temple (see Mt 4:1-11). These rejections of Satan's "offers" in the wilderness the Grand Inquisitor describes as fatal errors. To be happy, he says, men must be ruled by those who will give them bread, astonish them with spectacles, and control them with absolute power.

The Inquisitor admits that he practices a great deception. Though he claims to represent Christ, he has in reality accepted the political schemes of the Adversary. Though he understands the utter incongruity of his own actions, he persists in them out of a perverted love for the poor, blind human race and he does so in the name of Him, in whose

ideal he "had so fervently believed all his life long." He even threatens Jesus with execution, but when his lengthy monologue is over, Christ looks gently at him and does not reply. The sad Inquisitor longs for a word from Him; instead, Jesus approaches him with the same silence with which He stood before the spokesman of Rome's indisputable power, and kisses him. There is nothing left for the Inquisitor but to open the door, through which the Prisoner quietly leaves. Only the terrible incongruity remains: The kiss of Christ glows in the old man's heart, but he continues to be the Grand Inquisitor who will not turn from the way of absolute power.

The Christ of this fantasy is the image of divine Love. Like all lovers, God "exposes" Himself to the possibility of betrayal by the beloved. From the beginning, He has endowed men with intelligence and free will by which they may know the perfect happiness of freely and lovingly giving themselves to Him. He has done so, knowing that men would abuse these gifts and rise up in pride against Him. Admittedly, this is a mystery but it is also a measure of the inestimable worth God attaches to the love with which we return His own. So great is His love for men that He does not abandon even those who abuse it. He is vulnerable as any loving father is and cannot give up Ephraim whom He taught to walk and drew with the bands of love (see *Os* 11:3-8). To draw all men closer to Himself He wrought their redemption on Golgotha.

In the act of redemption, however, as in the act of creation, divine Love runs a risk, the risk not only of all love, but the immeasurably greater risk of the Infinite bending down to the finite. In establishing His Church, Christ gave her infallibility in matters of faith and morals. But He did not and does not take from her members the gift of free choice, not even from those who administer her temporal affairs or construct her ecclesiastical policy. Because of this freedom some, like Peter in Gethsemane, will confuse the use of the sword to the point of tragedy.

I

THE ecclesiastical problem that gave rise to the various Catholic inquisitions—episcopal, legatine, and monastic—was primarily that of heresies springing up within the Church; occasionally offenses, such as

sodomy, necromancy, and the bearing of false witness, were under consideration, too. The medieval inquisitors were ecclesiastical officials concerned with the administration of Church discipline and the failure of baptized persons to abide by their obligations. Although an objective and critical history of the inquisitions is yet to be written,¹ certain facts are well established, and it is possible to draw a general picture of how the inquisitions came to be.

The attitude of early Christian writers toward heresy is reflected in the words of St. Ignatius of Antioch who wrote at the beginning of the second century A.D.:

Make no mistake, brethren; the corrupters of families will not inherit the kingdom of God. If, then, those are dead who do these things according to the flesh, how much worse if, with bad doctrine, one should corrupt the faith of God for which Jesus Christ was crucified. Such a man, for becoming contaminated, will depart into unquenchable fire; and so will anyone who listens to him.²

In his work *Against the Heresies*, written about 180 A.D., St. Irenaeus condemned those who would falsify the word of God and the truths of the Catholic faith, which like the sun is one and the same all over the world. The true doctrine, he said, was to be found only in the Catholic Church, the depository of the apostolic teaching, while heresies are of more recent origin.³

Yet for all their vehemence against Docetism, Gnosticism, and all other ancient heresies, the early defenders of orthodoxy used no force other than argument against their opponents. Excommunication was the most severe punishment possible; even the suggestion of the

1. Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages* (3 vols.; New York: Harbor, 1887-88) and his *History of the Inquisition of Spain* (4 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1906-07) are extensive, thorough works but somewhat outmoded and open to charges of having a generally anti-Catholic bias. Bernardino Llorca, *La Inquisición en España* (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1946) and his *La Inquisición Española* (Santander: Universidad Pont. Comillas, 1953), represent a modern Spanish scholar's efforts to present the subject in a more favorable light. Introductory studies which represent different points of view are: Arthur S. Turberville, *The Spanish Inquisition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932); Cecil Roth, *The Spanish Inquisition* (London: Hale, 1937); George Gordon Coulton, *Inquisition and Liberty* (London: Heinemann, 1938); Henri Maisonneuve, *Etudes sur les origines de l'inquisition* (Paris: Vrin, 1942).

2. St. Ignatius of Antioch, "To the Ephesians, XVI," *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Gerard G. Walsh (New York: Cima, 1930), p. 93 (PG 5:658B).

3. St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, Praef; I, x; III, iv (PG 7:437, 553, 858).

death penalty for heretics was foreign to the minds of the early Fathers. "It is man's right and within the natural endowment of everyone to worship what he thinks he should. . . . It is not religion's way to enforce religion, which ought to be accepted freely and not by coercion. . . ." ⁴ These are words Tertullian addressed to Scapula, a Roman governor in Africa, in 212 A.D., shortly after the governor had begun to persecute the Church.

The ecclesiastical attitude toward heretics during the first four centuries was expressed in the canonical principle: *Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*, "The Church detests the shedding of blood." ⁵ It was no less clearly stated by the third-century bishop of Carthage, St. Cyprian, who saw the New Dispensation transcend some of the harsh demands of the Old:

God commanded that those who did not obey His priests or hearken to His judges . . . should be slain. Then indeed they were slain with the sword, while the circumcision of the flesh was yet in force; but now that circumcision has begun to be of the spirit among God's faithful servants, the proud and contumacious are slain with the sword of the spirit by being cast out of the Church. ⁶

During the fourth century, with the conversion of Constantine and the evolving ideal of the unity of Church and Empire, the early tradition began to change. The emperors—whether they were orthodox like Constans or heretical like Constantius—were primarily concerned with civil peace. Beginning with the reign of Theodosius the Great (346–395), efforts to achieve imperial unity were inevitably combined with those enforcing religious harmony; it was believed that prosperity in temporal affairs could not be achieved unless the exercise of imperial power was extended so as to protect the true religion. That the beliefs and practices of certain groups of nonconformists were extremely antisocial cannot be denied. The Manicheans, for example, who in some cases condemned marriage and family life, presented an especially difficult problem. Again, the schismatic followers of Bishop Donatus in North Africa disturbed the social order by rising

4. Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, II (PL 1:777).

5. Elphège Vacandard, *The Inquisition, a Critical and Historical Study of the Coercive Power of the Church*, trans. Bertrand L. Conway (New York: Paulist Press, 1949), p. 6.

6. St. Cyprian, *Epist. LXII* (PL 4:381–382).

in armed rebellion when their appeals against the decisions of two Church councils were rejected by the emperor.

In his early dealings with both Manicheans and Donatists, St. Augustine of Hippo was as a rule tolerant and strongly opposed the use of such penalties as torture and death.⁷ But since rulers must answer to God for their policies and, as St. Paul taught, must punish those who do evil (see Rom 13:4), St. Augustine admitted the right of the state to punish schismatics and heretics with the common punishments of flogging, fines, and exile whenever these religious dissenters disturbed the public peace.⁸ Like St. Ambrose and other outstanding theologians of his age, St. Augustine could scarcely escape the consequences of a changed historical situation. From the time of Constantine, theologians were confronted with the problem of professedly Christian rulers. Matters were far simpler when the pagan Nero was Rome's emperor.

It seems significant that the most notorious example of the death penalty imposed by the state against one accused of heresy should have taken place in Spain during the fourth century. What Vacandard rightly calls the deplorable trial and execution of Priscillian, the learned bishop of Avila, prefigures the same domination of ecclesiastical authority by the civil administration that, centuries later, was to be responsible for the abuses of the Spanish Inquisition. Priscillian was accused of Manicheism and the practice of magic. In 385, after Pope Damasus and St. Ambrose had refused to hear his defense, a synod was assembled at Bordeaux to examine the condemnation that had been pronounced against him at Saragossa five years earlier. Then Priscillian himself, not the bishops who had accused him, presented his case to the Emperor Maximus, much to the distress of St. Martin, who argued that the state could not judge a question of theological doctrine.

Eventually, Priscillian was tried and condemned by the secular courts for the crime of magic; he and some of his followers were executed. Popular feeling was so strong against Bishop Ithacius, one of the chief accusers, that he was driven from his see, and many outstanding theologians of the time condemned the penalty inflicted.⁹

7. See Vacandard, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14.

8. See *ibid.*, p. 15.

9. See *ibid.*, pp. 17-20 and Adhémur D'Alès, *Priscillien et l'Espagne chrétienne à la fin du IV^e siècle* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1936).

Though Ithacius had disassociated himself from the secular trial and though Priscillian was not actually executed for heresy, it was an irony of history that the Christian emperors of fourth century Rome should have considered themselves responsible for the forcible defense of the faith, which their pagan predecessors had persecuted.

II

FROM the sixth to the eleventh century, there was little organized persecution of heresy. But, as Lord Acton has pointed out, during the same period certain events took place in Spain that laid the foundation for the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition some centuries later.¹⁰ Arianism was then the religion of the Gothic state, while the Catholic faith was that of the Hispano-Roman majority—a division that made the political union of Spain difficult to achieve. King Euric (467–485), like the Gothic kings of Italy and southern Gaul, sought to meet this threat to his rule by a policy of conciliation and compromise.¹¹

Under the Arian King Leovigild (568–586), however, religious war broke out in Andalusia. Hermenegild, one of Leovigild's sons who had been converted to the Catholic faith, headed a serious insurrection of Catholics and Byzantines. Though he was defeated at Cordova and executed by his father, his brother Reccared, on his accession to the throne, became a Catholic, too. During his rule, religious unity became a Spanish political principle; the Third Synod of Toledo (589) condemned Arianism and placed certain disabilities on the Jewish population.

Jews were then numerous in Spain. Before the Gothic invasions they had generally not been persecuted, although the Code of Theodosius forbade them to build new synagogues, to hold public or military office, and to own Christian slaves. Under the Goths, these restrictions were barely enforced. More highly cultivated than the barbarian conquerors and in no way involved in the Arian-Catholic controversy, Jews made ideal civil servants. But upon the conversion of Reccared, a change took place. According to the decrees of Toledo, the old

10. See Lord Acton, *Essays on Church and State*, ed. Douglas Woodruff (London: Hollis and Carter, 1952), pp. 383–389.

11. See Rafael Altamira, *A History of Spain*, trans. Muna Lee (New York: Van Nostrand, 1949), p. 78.

Theodosian restrictions were to be rigidly enforced. In addition, no further marriages were to be permitted between Jews and Catholics, and all children of existing mixed marriages were to be baptized.

Those responsible for the enforcement of the old restrictions and the issuance of the new evidently supposed that the conquest of Judaism would be no more difficult than was the victory over Arianism. But they were mistaken. In 612, during Sisebut's reign, the Crown adopted a measure which, in the words of Lord Acton, threw "a gloom over the whole history of Spain, [a measure] which proved in its results injurious to the Church, pernicious to the State, and which was the real cause of the establishment of the Inquisition, and of the consequences which ensued."¹² All Jews who did not consent to baptism were ordered to leave the country. This decree—which, incidentally, was censured by St. Isidore of Seville and by the Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Synods of Toledo—established a principle of action that confirms John Henry Newman's opinion: "Christian states move forward upon the same laws [as pre-Christian states] and rise and fall, as time goes on, upon the same internal principles. Human nature remains what it was though it has been baptized; the proverbs, the satires, the pictures of which it was the subject in heathen times, have their point still."¹³

By forcing the faith upon those who did not freely accept it, the law of Sisebut was contrary to Catholic doctrine. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, explicitly says: "Among the nonbelievers [in Christ], there are some who have never received the faith, such as the heathens and the Jews. They are by no means to be compelled to the faith, in order that they may believe, because to believe depends on the will."¹⁴ Under the criticism of theologians, the law fell into disuse a few years after it had been established. As a result, many of those who had chosen exile rather than forced baptism returned. But there remained a grave problem, that of "converts" who had returned to Judaism.

Theologians argued that, while acceptance of the faith is a matter of the will, keeping the faith is a matter of obligation. Consequently,

12. Acton, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.

13. John Henry Newman, *Parochial Sermons* (New York: Appleton, 1843), II, 91.

14. *Summa Theol.* II-II, q. 10, a. 8, c. See also Canon 1351 of the *Codex Juris Canonici*. It reads: *Ad amplexandam fidem catholicam nemo inuitus cogatur*, "No one may be forced to embrace the Catholic faith against his will."

in 633 the Fourth Synod of Toledo, the same that had disapproved the law of Sisebut,¹⁵ declared that, although the Jewish *conversos* had been baptized under compulsion, they were now Christians and subject to disciplinary punishment for abandonment of the faith. It was decreed, therefore, that those who had relapsed and persisted in their error were to be reduced to slavery. In the words of Lord Acton: "The government could not escape from the terrible consequences of the first compulsory conversion, by which an element of unbelief and hypocrisy was introduced into the Church, which she could neither crush nor cast out."¹⁶

The action of the Fourth Synod of Toledo was not related, however, to an existing system of inquisitorial tribunals in the universal Church. There was no such system in the seventh century; it was to evolve gradually out of conditions that arose some four hundred years later. About the year 1000, various Neo-Manichean heresies began to penetrate northern Italy, Spain, and southern France. These heresies posed a number of disturbing social problems; there was a kind of madness about many of their adherents which modern psychiatry might better understand, but which medieval men may be pardoned for attributing to demonic activity. Theirs was a pessimistic doctrine of the fundamental duality and incessant warfare between the flesh and the spirit. They frequently expressed this belief by extreme, indeed, suicidal fasts and by repudiating marriage. No doubt, many were sincere in the practice of these austerities, but like Puritans of all times, they were frequently given to denouncing the supposed vices of others and to rejecting all authority that did not conform to their own views. Often calling themselves Cathari, "the Pure," they were the offspring of the dualistic Paulicians and Bogomiles, many of whom had fled from the Byzantine Empire into Western Europe in order to escape persecution.

Neo-Manichean teachings and influence spread rapidly and penetrated all classes of society, especially in Languedoc. There not only the nobility but many members of the clergy were infected. Wherever the heretics gained strength, they provoked violent reactions and some-

15. See Mansi's *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence and Venice, 1759-98), X, 663.

16. Acton, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

times retaliated with attacks on orthodox Catholics and the property of the Church. It was a time of cruel passions and brutal penalties, but we who live in a world that has produced Dachau, Buchenwald, the labor camps of Soviet Russia, the atrocities of the Spanish Civil War, and the lynchings of American Negroes can hardly claim that ours is in every way a gentler environment.¹⁷

Mob violence, as much as the threat the heretics themselves posed to the security of Church and state, brought demands from both bishops and princes that severe judicial measures be taken. These demands, together with the revival of Roman law and the development of Canon law from the time of Gratian (1140) onward, lay behind the development of what is now called the Medieval Inquisition. At first most churchmen either kept aloof from the action of both the princes and the populace or expressed their objection to the death penalty.¹⁸ A synod held at Rheims in 1157 and the Third Council of the Lateran in 1179, however, called for the establishment of episcopal tribunals to combat heresy and for the support of the secular arm in carrying out their decisions. In 1184 and 1198, then, decretals of Popes Lucius III and Innocent III founded episcopal inquisitions. Pope Innocent also made use of papal legates to inquire into the spread of the doctrines of the Cathari in southern France. When one of these legates, Peter of Castelnau, was murdered in 1208, the Pope proclaimed a crusade against the heretics, who were ruthlessly suppressed by Catholic armies under Simon de Montfort.

The proper history of the Medieval or Monastic Inquisition begins with this lamentable struggle (1208-1229).¹⁹ Authorized by Pope Gregory IX in 1233, the Inquisition's work was largely entrusted to the Dominicans and the Franciscans. It is scarcely just to say, as does Rabbi Meyer Kayserling, that "the mendicant orders of friars . . .

17. I mention lynching of Negroes in America, because I think a Christian author should not castigate the sins of other nations without mentioning those of his own. Yet I do not wish to imply that the sporadic lynchings of American Negroes are on a par with Nazi and Communist atrocities. They are not. The latter took and take place with full sanction of the state; the former occur when mobs take the law into their own hands, and not through government action.

18. See Vacandard, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-49; also Jean Guiraud, *Histoire de l'inquisition au moyen âge* (2 vols.; Paris: Picard, 1935) and Alan L. Maycock, *The Inquisition, from Its Establishment to the Great Schism* (London: Constable, 1927).

19. See Albert C. Shannon, *The Popes and Heresy in the Thirteenth Century* (Villanova: Augustinian Press, 1949), *passim*.

being severed from all worldly ties, were sure to show themselves pitiless in the persecution of heretics and infidels.”²⁰ The reason for entrusting the friars with the combat against error seems rather to have been the mission of preaching and teaching that was theirs from the beginning; not only did they have among their members highly competent theologians but they were also in the best position to consult with local bishops while operating under papal authority. Moreover, before his death in 1221, St. Dominic had played a particularly notable role in the attempt to win back the heretics of Languedoc by preaching, prayer, and the example of self-denial. Although he had no direct part in the establishment of the Monastic Inquisition, the order which he founded was quite understandably associated with the defense of orthodoxy.

III

BY THE middle of the thirteenth century, the Monastic Inquisition was well-established though not universally active; in some areas, such as England, it was virtually unknown. In Spain it was permanently established after 1258 only in Aragon, where its activities were local and spasmodic.

As a modern Spanish novelist reminds us, there has always been deeply imbedded in the minds of Spaniards an intense feeling that religious faith is the foundation of their national unity.²¹ Heresy itself was no real problem in medieval Spain; many persons investigated by the Monastic Inquisition were simply refugees from southern France. In fact, the rise of the new, the purely Spanish Inquisition had little to do with the causes that produced the older, papal institution, although its procedures were influenced by the earlier model. The Spanish Inquisition, primarily directed against Jews and Moors who had accepted baptism and who were thought to have secretly reverted to their former beliefs and practices, was the outcome of a situation peculiar to the Iberian peninsula.

The rule of the Visigothic kings was ended by the Saracen invasion and victory at Guadalete in 711. According to one author, some Jews

20. "Inquisition," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VI, 587.

21. See José Maria Gironella, *The Cypresses Believe in God*, trans. Harriet de Onís (2 vols.; New York: Knopf, 1955), II, 643.

conspired with the Saracens to bring this about.²² Another simply says that the Moslems invaded Spain as allies and supporters of one Visigothic party contending for the crown.²³ In any event, from the end of the first decade of the eighth century to the fall of the Moorish kingdom of Granada in 1492, the history of Spain was marked by a long struggle to reconquer the land from the Moslems. The goal of this struggle was political and religious unity: Orthodoxy and Spanish nationalism were to become synonymous.

As the Catholic Spanish forces slowly pushed back the Saracen power, the presence of large, flourishing Jewish communities in the regained sections was a potential source of conflict, particularly since some Spaniards believed that the Jews favored the Saracens. Yet, from the time of reconquest until the middle of the fourteenth century, most Jews enjoyed a greater security in Spain than elsewhere in Europe. Living in some 250 communities, they continued to develop their culture and the prosperity they had attained under Moslem rule.²⁴ As under the Saracen hegemony, some Spaniards had been converted to Islam, so at the time of reconquest an indeterminate number of Moors and Jews adopted Christianity. The first were known as *moriscos*, the second as *conversos*.²⁵ Outstanding among these was Rabbi Selemoh ha-Levi, who not only became a Catholic but a priest and later even Bishop of Burgos.

So greatly did Jewish life in Spain flourish that many Jews became extremely powerful in the economic and political life of its Christian kingdoms. Their skill in finance made them indispensable to the kings whose struggles with Saracens, rebellious nobles, and other Christian monarchs constantly drained their resources. Unhappily for the Jews

22. See William Thomas Walsh, *Characters of the Inquisition* (New York: Kenedy, 1940), p. 141.

23. See Altamira, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

24. The number of Jews living in Castile at the close of the thirteenth century has been estimated at between four and five million, but this is disputed. (See Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 141.)

25. Popularly, the *conversos* were known as *marranos*. Several interpretations have been given to the term, the most likely being that of Cecil Roth: "The word Marrano is an old Spanish term dating back to the early Middle Ages and meaning swine. Applied to the recent converts in the first place perhaps ironically, with reference to their aversion from the flesh of the animal in question, it ultimately became a general term of execration which spread during the sixteenth century to most of the languages of western Europe." (*A History of the Marranos*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1941, p. 28.)

and the *conversos*, they were frequently employed in the unpopular role of tax collectors. Under Pedro the Cruel, who was king of Castile and León from 1350 to 1369, taxes were especially oppressive. Hence the people rebelled against him, but in the ensuing civil war their hatred was unleashed against the Jewish tax collectors.

The last decade of the fourteenth century marked the end of relative security for the Jews in Spain. They were charged with plotting to take over the country, but also with blasphemy, witchcraft, and alchemy. High rates of interest, sometimes as much as forty per cent, were attributed to Jewish moneylenders. The Archdeacon of Seville, Fernando Martinez, went so far as to resurrect the old calumny that the Jews were responsible for the Black Death, a charge which Pope Clement VI roundly condemned.²⁶ In 1391, openly defying the papal condemnation and the orders of his own ecclesiastical superiors, Archdeacon Martinez incited mobs to plunder, even to exterminate the Jews of Seville. Many died in the pogrom, others submitted to baptism or were sold into slavery. The fire of hatred spread through Castile, Aragon, and Catalonia, but the measures taken to punish those responsible served only to infuriate the population further.

From 1385 to the outbreak of these dreadful massacres, the number of Jewish *conversos* had increased by the thousands, largely as a result of the efforts of the eloquent Dominican preacher St. Vincent Ferrer. It cannot be doubted that many of the *conversos* were sincere, men of conviction, but during and after the pogrom of 1391, as in the time of King Sisebut, great numbers of Jews were compelled to accept baptism in order to save their lives and their possessions. Consequently, there were among the New Christians, as the *conversos* were frequently called, and among their descendants, those who paid no more than lip service to the Catholic faith, in fact they "preserved their love for Judaism and secretly observed the Jewish law and Jewish customs."²⁷

The New Christians prospered both in business and in the learned professions; some rose to high positions through intermarriage with the nobility; others gained posts of great importance in the hierarchy of the Church. A few examples of insincerity among those who took

26. Other popes had condemned this falsehood. See Lea, *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, I, 101, and Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

27. "Inquisition," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VI, 588.

Holy Orders can be cited.²⁸ There may even be some substance to the charge made about 1459 by the Franciscan Fray Alonso de Espina in his notorious tract, *Fortalitium Fidei*, "Stronghold of Faith," that if an inquisition were established in Castile, many of the New Christians would be shown as having made a mockery of the faith. De Espina, however, himself a New Christian and rector of the University of Salamanca, repeated all the ancient lies about the Jews. By both writing and preaching he spread the calumnies that they caused plagues by poisoning the wells, that they practiced ritual murder, and that the New Christians, too, were guilty of the same abominations. Wherever he went, the *conversos* suffered persecution.

In 1467, a series of violent attacks against the New Christians began in Toledo, where the population had been forced to raise a huge loan for the defense of the frontier. Since the tax collectors were either Jews or *conversos*, all anger turned against them. When two canons preached resistance against the levy and summoned the people to the cathedral, a bloody fight broke out between New and Old Christians. It was followed by a wild butchery in that quarter of the city most of the New Christians occupied. A succession of similar episodes here and there resulted in what must be called a civil war. In 1474, the situation was brought to a climax by a particularly furious outbreak in Segovia, the temporary capital of Isabella, who was still trying to establish herself as the queen of all Castile. The New Christians were attacked as a pretext for overthrowing the governor of the city, and only the timely warning of the papal legate, the future Pope Alexander VI, saved them from total destruction.

To King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile, who married in 1469 and, ten years later, were firmly in control of their separate dominions, Spain's political unity and stability were of paramount consideration. The violence and disunity caused by the conflicts between the New and the Old Christians could not be tolerated if Spain was to achieve national greatness. Dissident elements, like the factious nobles, hindered the imperial aspirations of the two rulers. Their aspirations, rather than racial prejudice or religious fanaticism, were the immediate causes of the Spanish Inquisition which,

28. Walsh (see *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146) draws his information from Lea (*History of the Inquisition of Spain*, II, 2), who was certainly not prejudiced in favor of the Inquisition.

from its inception, was far more a means to augment and preserve royal power than a purely ecclesiastical tribunal. Like the seventh-century law of King Sisebut, it was an instrument designed to unify and centralize the nation, a means considered necessary for the safety of the emerging state.

IV

THE Spanish Inquisition of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was thus markedly different from earlier inquisitions. Its rigid organization, its close supervision by the Crown, its independence of episcopal—and at times even papal—control were new phenomena in inquisitorial history. An anomaly in the hierarchical structure of the Church, it may rightly be thought of as the device by which the rulers of Spain, especially Ferdinand and Philip II, secured powers which the French kings later gained by their own system of control over ecclesiastical affairs.

The principle of national and religious conformity which the Spanish Inquisition sought to enforce was neither uniquely Spanish nor peculiarly Catholic. Both the Catholic and Protestant signatories of the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555 agreed to the principle *cuius regio, eius religio*. According to it, the religion of the ruler decides the religion of the subjects. The idea of religious pluralism within the state, although recognized for a time in France under the Edict of Nantes, was no more appealing to Calvinists, Lutherans, or Anglicans in the sixteenth century than it was to Catholics. Elizabeth I of England and her Secretary of State, Lord Burleigh, organized and directed a secret police force that hunted down Catholic recusants, confiscated their property, subjected them to judicial torture, brought them to trial, and often to a terrible death with quite the same zeal and efficiency as did the rulers of Spain and the inquisitors who served them. At the time that the American colonies were founded, conformity with established belief was a matter of course—the Catholics of Maryland, the Quakers in Pennsylvania, and the various nonconformists of Rhode Island were but exceptions in the practice of religious tolerance. The Protestant terrorism at Basel in 1528 and the violent persecution of the Arminians in Calvinist Holland in 1619 are further evidence

of the fact that the subjugation of religion to the ruling powers was not exclusively a Spanish or a Catholic tragedy.

Professional historians may debate many questions of fact concerning Spain's Inquisition, but one thing seems clear: The Spanish Inquisition was the logical outcome of a common belief that no state could develop, maintain, and expand its authority while the religious outlook of a strong section of the community differed from that of the rulers. It was this conviction that in 1478 led Ferdinand and Isabella to ask Pope Sixtus IV for the authority to establish the tribunal of the Inquisition in Castile. Much had stood in the way of this decision. The New Christians were not without influence at court: Not a few of Isabella's statesmen, secretaries, close friends, and leading ecclesiastics were *conversos*. Many of the most influential noble families were not only staunchly conservative and opposed to all innovations, they also numbered *conversos* or their descendants among their own ranks. Moreover, the Medieval Inquisition, long established in Aragon, was an instrument of the papacy, and it seemed to some that introducing the Inquisition elsewhere in Spain would unduly extend the papal power.

We do not know who first suggested an organized inquisition to Queen Isabella. To ascribe its beginnings to Fray Tomás de Torquemada, the Dominican Prior of Santa Cruz in Segovia, is certainly an oversimplification. Even Thomas Hope, whose biography of Torquemada is in no way sympathetic to its subject, considers that many other influences were at work on the mind of the young, pious Queen.²⁹ Nicolao Franco, papal legate and Bishop of Treviso, for example, strongly urged that an inquisition be introduced to deal with relapsed *conversos*. Fray Alfonso de Ojeda and Fray Diego de Merlo advised the same in a report on conditions in Andalusia. The great Renaissance Cardinal Pedro Gonzales de Mendoza, although somewhat reluctant at first, may have influenced the Queen by asking Pope Sixtus IV to name four delegates so that they could aid the bishops of Castile in dealing with the secret apostasy of *conversos*. At the same time, the Sicilian inquisitor Fray Felipe de Barberis, while visiting Spain, instructed Isabella in the methods of the Monastic Inquisition.

29. See Thomas Hope, *Torquemada Scourge of the Jews* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1939), pp. 46-52.

In November 1478, Sixtus IV issued a bull to the Spanish monarchs authorizing the establishment of the Inquisition in Castile. He may have had in mind a Monastic Inquisition of the sort that already existed in Aragon, yet he permitted the rulers to appoint either secular priests or members of any religious community. They were to act "under the usual jurisdiction and authority that law and custom allow to Ordinaries and Inquisitors of heretical depravity."³⁰ For almost two years, however, the powers the bull had granted were not used. Persuasion and instruction were employed instead, and Cardinal Mendoza's *Catecismo de la Doctrina Cristiana* was widely circulated to overcome the Judaizing tendency or secret apostasy of many Castilian *conversos*.

The apparent failure of these efforts and the rising threat of the Turks, suggesting new dangers from the Moslem kingdom of Granada, brought matters to a head. In September 1480, at Medina del Campo, Cardinal Mendoza was authorized by the Crown to establish an active tribunal of the Inquisition, with Fray Tomás de Torquemada acting as consultant. The first inquisitors were the Dominicans Fray Michael Morillo and Fray Juan de San Martín who, assisted by two secular priests, set up the first court and proclaimed the first edict of grace in Seville. The edict of grace called upon all who were guilty of offenses against the faith to come forward, to put away their errors, and be reconciled with the Church. The *conversos*, understandably enough, planned to defend themselves by armed force. Many leading citizens, including a number of priests and the dean of the cathedral, were parties to this ill-fated conspiracy. But the plans were betrayed, and on February 6, 1481, the first auto-da-fé was held. Six persons were handed over to the civil authorities and burned to death outside the walls of the city, while various penances were imposed on those who confessed under the edict of grace.

It soon became evident that, as an instrument of Spanish royal power, the New Inquisition would follow a stormy course to its very end. The Holy See was given early proof that even Queen Isabella, intensely Catholic as she was, could put her own authority above that of the pope. In a dispute over the appointment of a bishop

30. Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 150. See also Bernardino Llorca, "Bulario Pontificio de la Inquisición Española," *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificae*, XV (Rome: Gregorian University, 1949).

for the See of Cuenca, Isabella wrested from Pope Sixtus IV the right to appoint her own candidate, Alonso of Burgos, the royal chaplain and the offspring of a family of *conversos*. Having refused to accept the Pope's nominee, one of his own nephews, the Queen even threatened to stir other rulers into action against the Holy See. This attitude of hers lent weight to a stream of complaints against the inquisitors of Seville. Thus in January 1482, the Pope wrote a stern letter to the Spanish Crown, charging that Morillo and San Martin were not co-operating with the bishops as the medieval inquisitors had done, and that they were proceeding with undue cruelty and much injustice to the innocent.

As a result the Pope refused the monarchs permission to extend the New Inquisition into Aragon and announced, in February 1482, that henceforth he would appoint the inquisitors himself. He then proceeded to name eight Dominicans, including Torquemada, to be in charge of the tribunals of Castile and León, expecting them to act in accordance with the traditions of the Monastic Inquisition. The Pope seems to have suspected that the *conversos* were being plundered and that, because war with the Moors had been renewed, measures taken against them were made harsher. In any case, in February 1483, he complained once more of the injustices by the Spanish inquisitors that had been reported to him. Again, in August of the same year he sent a ten-page bull declaring that he was displeased with the weakness of the papal court of appeals he had authorized in Seville and with the severity of the inquisitors which went far beyond the "moderation of law."

V

HOWEVER one may judge the motives and vacillations of Pope Sixtus IV, the fact is that he eventually yielded to the pressures of the Spanish Crown. Torquemada, whose devotion to the Spanish monarchy fostered a kind of caesaropapism, convinced Isabella and Ferdinand that all the powers of the Inquisition should, under their joint direction, be centralized in him. In October 1483, the Pope appointed Torquemada as Inquisitor-General with supreme power to elect or replace his subordinates.³¹ He was also authorized to reor-

31. It should be noted that Llorca remarks that he has not been able to find the Pope's letter of appointment. (See "Bulario Pontificio," p. 111, n.)

ganize the whole structure of the Inquisition in Spain, and later in the same month, his jurisdiction was extended to Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia.

Thus it is true that Torquemada, who according to the authority of Pulgar was himself partly of Jewish descent,³² shaped the Spanish Inquisition which brought untold suffering on both Jews and *conversos*. If we accept the estimate of *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, he condemned more than 8,000 Jews and *conversos* to the stake.³³ Many Catholic apologists, adopting the figure of Pulgar, say that no more than 2,000 persons were executed during the entire reign of Queen Isabella, while William Thomas Walsh thinks that of some 100,000 cases dealt with by Torquemada, only about one per cent ended with the death penalty.³⁴ In dealing with so great an assault upon the dignity of the human person, statistical debate seems not only worthless but out of place. The horror is in no way mitigated by proving, if it can be proved, that during the period under discussion, 2,000 rather than 8,000 human beings were burned alive. Nor are the actual executions less shocking because they were carried out by secular courts rather than ecclesiastical authorities: A legal subtlety cannot lessen the dread of the historic record.

Still, the popular image of Torquemada as a monster of cruelty and viciousness is but a caricature of the misdirected and lamentable part he actually played. For him, and for the outlook he represented, membership in the Catholic Church as a supranational community was subordinated to the demands of a consuming nationalism. As Thomas Hope correctly sees it: "Before all else he was a Spaniard. His first interest was the unification and development of Spain, with which was unhappily combined the destruction of the Jews and the Moors and the integration of religion."³⁵

The methods of procedure Torquemada established were based upon those described in such works as the *Practica Inquisitionis* of Bernard of Gui and the *Directorium Inquisitorum* of Nicholas Eymeric, both

32. Hernando de Pulgar, himself a *converso*, was a contemporary of Torquemada and secretary to Queen Isabella. If his claim had been false, it seems that Torquemada would have denied it and punished the author. There appears to be no evidence that he did so.

33. "Inquisition," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VI, 592.

34. See Walsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.

35. Hope, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

compiled in the fourteenth century. The system of judicial torture associated with Torquemada's name was first authorized for the Medieval Inquisition by Pope Innocent IV in 1252 and was the common practice of civil authorities everywhere in Europe. The extreme penalty of death by burning at the stake for recalcitrant heretics and apostates, employed by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in Lombardy in 1224, was given canonical sanction a few years later by Pope Gregory IX.

The inquisitional process was as severe for relapsed converts from Islam as it was for Jewish *conversos*, and one can safely say that the standards of justice prevalent in those days were observed. Following a period of grace, accusations and depositions were received; the accused were then cited or arrested for interrogation. According to the *Instrucciones* of Torquemada, two witnesses of good repute had to make a deposition against a person before the secret preliminary investigation could begin, and false accusers were dealt with most harshly. During the formal interrogation counsel represented the accused, and while the names of witnesses for the prosecution were withheld, the defendant could provide a list of his enemies, which had to be examined. Judicial torture was by no means always applied, and confessions obtained by it were subject to further investigation and confirmation. Canonical penances, imprisonment, banishment, and the confiscation of property were among the penalties far more common than death at the stake. Considering the ways of the fifteenth century, it is fair to say that the procedures of the Inquisition were often more just and more humane than those of the secular courts.

By making the Inquisition an arm of the Spanish government, Torquemada effected a radical departure from his medieval predecessors. The Supreme Council of the Inquisition—made up of two members of the Royal Council, of a Dominican, and of another member taken in rotation from the other religious orders—became one of the departments through which all of Spain was governed. Attempts at resisting the Inquisition by the Catholic population of Aragon (1484), Catalonia (1487), and Mallorca (1490) were suppressed. Furthermore, reprisals taken by the *conversos*—such as the assassination in September 1485 of the inquisitor Pedro Arbués in Aragon—only gave the Inquisition increased popular support.

Served by a growing army of lay "familiars" and informers, many

of whom belonged to the Confraternity of St. Peter Martyr, the Inquisition became so integral a part of Spanish life that it was not abolished until 1820. In the course of its long history many of the greatest figures of the Spanish Church, indeed, the true representatives of Spanish Catholic thought and life, were persecuted or hampered in their work. Among them were Fray Luis de León, Fray Luis de Granada, the Venerable Juan de Avila, the great St. Teresa, and no less a man than St. Ignatius de Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Of the latter, Francisco Giner de los Rios, the eminent Spanish lawyer and teacher, says that he "laid the foundations of a religious life more in conformity with human nature . . . and stood . . . for an ideal in every way sounder, more realistic, and loftier than that of the supporters of that terrible institution [the Inquisition]." ³⁶ No group or religious order was exempt from its oppressive power. Even one of its most faithful servants, the Dominican Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, Bartolomé Carranza de Miranda, fell victim to its intrigues and was persecuted for supposed Protestant leanings—a charge which his entire career makes highly dubious. ³⁷

Directed at first against the *conversos*, the Inquisition proved to be a weapon of total royal control, aimed at anything or anyone that stood, or seemed to stand, in its way. In 1569, Pope St. Pius V was therefore driven to pray that the Church of Christ might be delivered from the tyranny of the Spanish Crown. So far did the Inquisition become removed from all outside ecclesiastical control that the president of King Philip's Royal Council could boldly declare to the papal nuncio: "There is no Pope in Spain." ³⁸ If one remembers the goal of the inquisitors, it was inevitable that the Inquisition should finally lead to the expulsion of the Jews. Their presence frustrated its task, for only in isolation could the *conversos* be made to surrender. From 1483 to 1486, King Ferdinand had pursued a policy of local expulsions, with fees for exemption to benefit his treasury. After the fall of Granada in March 1492 all Jewish persons in the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon were ordered either to be baptized or to leave the

36. As quoted by Altamira, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

37. See Heinrich Laugwitz, *Bartholomäus, Erzbischof von Toledo* (Kempten: Köfel, 1870), and Vincent Beltran de Heredia, *Las corrientes de espiritualidad entre los Dominicos de Castilla durante la primera mitad del siglo XV* (Salamanca: Imp. Commercial, 1941), pp. 110-156.

38. See Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

country. Between 210,000 and 300,000 went into exile, despoiled of much of their wealth, and many met death in the course of their wanderings. Fortunate were those who took refuge in Rome under the tolerant protection of Alexander VI.

One of the pretexts for this dire expulsion was the trial of two Jews and six *conversos* from the parish of La Guardia. They were said to have confessed to the crimes of having defiled the Sacred Host, practiced black magic, and committed a ritual murder—before a great crowd they were burned in November 1491. The facts behind the trial are still disputed³⁹ so that even the most ardent apologist of the Inquisition can write: "Some of the Jewish arguments against the guilt of the men executed at Avila in 1491 have considerable force. . . . I leave the matter to future historians, who may have more complete evidence on which to base a conclusion."⁴⁰ In any event, the trial and condemnation of these eight men—as much as the banishment of the whole Jewish population to which the calamity of La Guardia gave impetus—are evidence of the hatred and the violence engendered by the mentality and the methods of the Inquisition.

The evil effects this institution had upon Spain are impossible to estimate. The final judgment of history, however, may not be far from that of Lord Acton: "It did more than any other thing for the ruin of Church and State in Spain, by promoting political despotism and intellectual stagnation."⁴¹ Some may argue that the Inquisition preserved Spain from heresy and the wars of religion, but an equally strong case can be made for the theory that the conflict was merely postponed till it broke out in the Civil War of our day, when the battle was not with Protestantism but with a militant atheism, an atheism that might never have come about were it not for the repression the Inquisition had made habitual.

39. See Isidor Loeb's studies in *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Vols. XV, XVIII, XIX, XX. See also Cecil Roth, "Jews, Conversos, and the Blood-Accusation in Fifteenth Century Spain," and William T. Walsh, "A Reply to Dr. Roth," in *The Dublin Review*, CXCI, 383 (October 1932), pp. 219-252. Much useful information on the general background and history of this trial and the series of events leading to the expulsion may be found in the following: Roth, *A History of the Marranos*; Valeriu Marcu, *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, trans. Moray Firth (London: Constable, 1935); Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, "Los conversos de origen judío después de la expulsión," *Estudios de historia social de España*, III (Madrid, 1955), 225-431.

40. Walsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177.

41. Acton, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

VI

SOME critics of the various Catholic inquisitions confuse the Catholic faith with periods in the history and culture of predominantly Catholic nations.⁴² To such writers, civil and practical intolerance toward dissent as well as the use of force in the service of God seem an essential part of the Catholic way. They assume that wherever Catholics find themselves in complete political control, their religious beliefs compel them to use the power of the state in order to exterminate dissenters and discipline apostates. According to this view, the Church tolerates pluralism only where she is powerless to destroy it, and her attitude toward the secular, liberal democracies is said to be much the same as that of the Communists. The Catholic writer Louis Veuillot has even been charged with saying to modern liberals: "When we are a minority, we claim freedom for ourselves in the name of your principles of tolerance; when we are a majority, we deny freedom to you in the name of our own principles." But the charge is false: Veuillot never made the statement attributed to him.⁴³

What these critics overlook is the fact that the Spanish Inquisition arose out of a conflict between Catholic doctrine and the actions of powerful Spanish Catholics who forced the Jews to accept baptism. In the light of the teachings of the early Church fathers, however, and those of the recent popes, beginning with Leo XIII's encyclical *Libertas* (1888), it should be evident that the relationship between the Church and the State which made both the Spanish and the Medieval Inquisitions possible was, no matter how long it lasted, an accidental and temporary arrangement that did not derive from the essential and enduring nature of the Church.⁴⁴

To a true Catholic, the Church is not "a spiritual police force, but blood of my own blood, the life of whose abundance I live."⁴⁵ Ac-

42. Such is the viewpoint of Coulton, *op. cit.*, and *Is the Catholic Church Anti-Social, a Debate with Arnold Lunn* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1946). One effective reply is that found in James M. O'Neill's *Catholicism and American Freedom* (New York: Harper's, 1952).

43. See Giacomo Cardinal Lercaro, "Religious Tolerance in Catholic Tradition," *Catholic Mind*, LVIII, 1147 (Jan.-Feb. 1960), p. 15.

44. See John A. Ryan, S.J., and Moorhouse F. X. Millar, S.J., *The State and the Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 34.

45. Romano Guardini, *The Church and the Catholic* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1940), p. 47.

according to Pope Leo XIII, she is a discerning mother who takes account of the great burden of human frailty and of the special problems confronting every age. She realizes, therefore, that what she holds to be "at variance with truth and justice" must often be permitted to exist in human society, "partly that greater good may not be impeded and partly that greater evil may not ensue."⁴⁶

As the story of the Inquisition abundantly proves, there have been men in the Church who assumed that in a given historical situation enforced religious conformity and the necessary order of society are coextensive. Even saints have offered a religious justification for violence in the militant defense of cultural patterns that were only of temporary significance. Yet, in dealing with error and unbelief, Catholics may not forget the fundamental implications of the parable of the cockle and the wheat (see Mt 13:24-30). In the Middle Ages, this was not always apparent to those responsible for ecclesiastical policies, especially in Spain as the bitter period of reconquest drew to a close. "The medieval knight was," as Christopher Dawson has seen so well, "a barbarian warrior with a veneer of Christian chivalry, and the medieval prelate was first cousin to the medieval baron."⁴⁷ To those accountable for the rise of the Spanish Inquisition the distinction between intolerance of error in the intellectual order and intolerance of men in the civil and practical order was far from clear, whereas today representative Catholic leaders take the distinction for granted.⁴⁸

The dogmatic intolerance of the Church is based upon the unshakable conviction that she is the one divinely empowered teacher of moral and religious truths, of truths that are objective and everlasting. By her very nature she cannot accept the relativism that holds equally valid moral and religious teachings that not only contradict one another but also stand opposed to the truth she is committed to proclaim and defend. Yet, this intolerance in the intellectual order by no means requires a civil policy of intolerance toward dissenters.

46. See the encyclical *Libertas* (1888) by Leo XIII, as quoted by Lercaro, *loc. cit.*, p. 13.

47. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1935), p. 120.

48. In addition to the authoritative statement of Cardinal Lercaro (*loc. cit.*), see the pronouncement of the Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva, and Fribourg, François Charrière, "The Church and Tolerance," *Catholic Mind*, trans. Gerald F. Yates, S.J., LVI, 1138 (July-August 1958), pp. 293-304.

On the contrary, as Cardinal Lercaro stresses, respect for the dignity of truth requires that freedom of assent should be granted to all men. Truth imposed is truth degraded; if not freely accepted, truth is not accepted for its own sake.⁴⁹ When a state seeks to force its citizens to conform to the Catholic religion—as the inquisitors did in Spain—there is an inevitable confusion between politics and religious truth whereby the latter becomes servant to the former.

Catholic truth holds, furthermore, that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. There is something in every man that transcends the historical moment and relates him to an eternal destiny. In every conflict between the Church and modern totalitarian states, this insistence upon the transcendent worth of the human person has been crucial. In Nazi Germany, as in the Communist empire, countless Catholic martyrs have witnessed to the Church's belief that the consciences of men must not and cannot be determined simply by historical forces.⁵⁰ The human soul receives faith in Christ as a divine gift. It is, therefore, nothing short of sacrilege to substitute coercion for grace, to seek to achieve by human force what only God can bring about.⁵¹ The evil consequences of such attempts cannot but be violently destructive to the life of religion and the common good of society.

In what Maritain has called "the decoratively Christian state"—in which a government uses its police powers to impose a Catholic social order more apparent than real—the vitality of a truly Christian political society disappears.⁵² Certainly truth must be given precedence over error, and in a society in which the religion of Christ is known, those who recognize it as true are obliged to further its spiritual mission. But social or political discrimination in favor of the Church

49. See Lercaro, *loc. cit.*, p. 18.

50. Only recently, the Catholic bishops of the Dominican Republic declared in a joint pastoral letter that "the basis and foundation of all positive law is the inviolable dignity of the human person. Each human being boasts, even before his birth, of a heritage of prior and higher law than those of any state whatever." In the same pastoral, the bishops spelled out a list of natural rights belonging to every human person and declared that any violation of these rights constitutes "a grave offense against God, against the dignity of man—made in the image and likeness of his Creator—and brings about many and irreparable evils in society." (*The New York Times*, February 3, 1960.)

51. See Lercaro, *loc. cit.*, pp. 18–19.

52. Jacques Maritain, *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, trans. Doris C. Anson (New York: Scribner's, 1943), p. 23.

almost inevitably compromises rather than helps this spiritual mission.

In fact, it can be said that the temporal common good of present-day society requires a pluralist conception that would—within the limits of public morality—assure the freedom and security of recognized religious bodies as well as protect the freedom of individual consciences. Pope Pius XII unmistakably revealed the mind of the Church when he declared:

God has not given to human authority . . . an absolute and universal control in matters of faith and morality. Such a command is unknown to the common convictions of mankind, to Christian conscience, to the sources of revelation and to the practice of the Church. To omit here other scriptural texts which are adduced in support of this argument, Christ in the parable of the cockle gives the following advice: Let the cockle grow in the field of the world together with the good seed in view of the harvest (see Mt 13:24-30). The duty of repressing moral and religious error cannot therefore be an ultimate norm of action. It must be subordinate to higher and more general norms which in particular circumstances permit, and perhaps even seem to indicate as the better policy, toleration of error in order to promote a greater good.⁵³

The late Pope's reference to "higher and more general norms" indicates that the Catholic concept of tolerance on the civil and practical level is not a mere matter of prudence, much less of opportunism. It is founded upon the demands of the common good of society and is, even more profoundly, a consequence of the Church's regard for truth and of her knowledge of the workings of God's grace in the souls of men. The dignity of the human person and its relation to the dignity of truth are eternal Christian verities.

The fact that, as it is generally agreed, limits must be placed upon such forms of worship as ritual prostitution, human sacrifice or cannibalism shows that no society can hold to a doctrine of total freedom of religion. Still, the principle that civil law and human authority must protect the freedom of men's consciences against abuse, and that it must avoid even the semblance of coercing nonbelievers to accept belief in Christ, is an essential part of Catholic tradition.

53. Pius XII, "Allocution to the Italian Catholic Jurists," December 3, 1953, as quoted by Lercaro, *loc. cit.*, pp. 13-14. See also "International Community and Religious Tolerance," *The Pope Speaks*, I, 1 (1954), p. 68.

Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor is a vivid image of the confusion of these values, of the abuse of power, and of the choice of means that are alien to the persuasive love of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church, and her only sword is His. Her right to discipline her own members, from imposing the smallest penance to the supreme penalty of excommunication, belongs to the realm of the spirit; it is inevitably perverted when made to serve purely temporal ends.

Whenever men of the Church put their whole trust in princes or in the acts of parliaments in order to accomplish what only holy zeal, loving patience, and above all the grace of God can do, they unwittingly prepare a disaster. Where Christ truly reigns, He reigns from the cross. He, the Lord of redeeming love, requires no other throne, and those who think that they are called upon to build Him a seat of power according to the secular pattern become entangled in a great and tragic illusion.

Frederick C. Ellert

FRANZ WERFEL'S GREAT DILEMMA

IN ONE of his final works Franz Werfel asserts that

Israel is chosen not only in the sense of being God's people. . . . Israel had to assume the role of antagonist so that the drama of salvation of a spurned Deity could unfold in time and reality as the sacrifice of the *Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi*. . . . God's providence in effect condemned Israel to reject God Himself for the salvation of the world.

Even for a Jew who regards Jesus Christ as the true, historically revealed Messiah, in fact as the Son of God, baptism and conversion are not enough. . . . He belongs to an entirely different order than [the nations]. The Jew is not "curable" through baptism and faith alone. . . . Every Jew . . . as a member of supratemporal Judaism has failed to recognize Jesus Christ . . . [therefore] cannot be released from his Jewish world history.

[Hence] this enormous paradox . . . : The predestined recipient of salvation is the only one who remains profoundly barred from it until the last day but one of universal history.¹

These lines from *Between Heaven and Earth* (1944) contain the substance of Franz Werfel's religious dilemma. At the very time he was setting them down, the Jews were going through the cruelest period of their history. His awareness of their mysterious existence and of their plight is reflected in most of his major works after 1925, the year of his first journey to Palestine, when his attention became focused upon the meaning and destiny of Israel, her relation to Christ, and his own part and place in this relationship.

1. Cf. Franz Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, trans. Maxim Newmark (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), pp. 195-196, 194, 195. This work is composed of three essays and reflections entitled "Theologumena." The first three were written in the Europe of the 30s, while the last section, with which I am most concerned in this essay, was composed in the United States between 1942 and 1944. Though translations of Werfel's works are my own, for the sake of the reader the references are, wherever possible, to the official English editions.

Up to that time he had concerned himself little, if at all, with these matters. Born of Jewish parents in Prague in 1890, he left his native city as a young man, never to return, except for an occasional visit. Deliberately cutting himself off from his home and his spiritual heritage, he spent most of his productive years in Vienna, the city he first came to know and to love in 1917 when he was officially summoned, after two years on the eastern front, to accept an assignment with the Austrian war propaganda office.

Denounced for his "pacifist," humanitarian writings before, during, and immediately after the war, the young poet became a marked man, often living under the threat of arrest and imprisonment. At the war's end he was drawn, by postwar revolutionary forces, into an unsuccessful attempt to establish the control of the "Red Guard" over Vienna. But he was too much of an individualist to join any political faction for long, or even any literary movement, though he did identify himself for a time with the expressionist group of writers.

The twenty or so years Werfel spent in Vienna were, for the most part, happy ones; they were fruitful, too, as attested by the range and volume of his creative achievements. Though by nature and first fame a lyric poet, his abundant energy flowed almost incessantly from one form to another: from lyric to dramatic poetry, from prose drama to the essay and the *novella*, from the novel to the pageant, from dramatic comedy and satire to hymnal prose and verse, from fantasy to reflection: ethical, philosophical, political, or theological.

On Friday, March 11, 1938, "Austria's black day,"² he was fortunately on the island of Capri, far from the sorrowful sight and sound of the Nazi invasion of Austria. But on that same day his exile began. Not long afterward, he and his wife found refuge in France, only to be trapped there in 1940 when that country fell to Hitler.

In the course of their circuitous search through the south of France for an escape route they were offered shelter in Lourdes, just when hope seemed all but lost. During their five weeks' stay there, Werfel began to inquire into the life of Bernadette. During the same period he made his well-known vow to pay homage to her if saved from the Nazis. About a year later, in the safety of California, he fulfilled

2. Werfel, *Die wahre Geschichte vom wiederhergestellten Kreuz* (Los Angeles: Privatdruck der Pazifischen Presse, 1952), p. 11.

this vow through *The Song of Bernadette* which was published in 1942.

Franz Werfel died in the summer of 1945, just a few days after the completion of his utopian novel, *Star of the Unborn*, which in a very real sense, as we shall see later, might well be designated as a "novel but not fiction," the words Werfel himself used to characterize *The Song of Bernadette*.³

FIRST STIRRINGS

NO SERIOUS consideration of Franz Werfel as a writer can bypass the religious issue in his works, particularly in so far as they impinge upon the points of agreement, as well as conflict, between Israel and the Church. These issues are centered in what Werfel calls four ways of "no escape" for Israel from the tragic perplexity in which the Jewish people has been "caught" during most of its unique history.

The four ways are briefly identified in the "Theologumena" section of *Between Heaven and Earth*. Speaking there of his people's plight under the Nazis, Werfel anxiously inquires: "To what refined state of bewilderment has God condemned those creatures to whom He once promised everlasting favor through Abraham?" His answer comes in a series of expostulations that explore swiftly and sharply four possible escape routes for Israel. Modern liberalism is summarily rejected as cheap and shallow. Nationalism is dismissed as a road leading to self-deception and even self-annihilation. Orthodoxy, though not unworthy, is characterized as a step backward, an unthinkable withdrawal from life to fossilization. "The way to Christ," Israel's true Interpreter to herself and to the world, he finds temporally blocked, that is to say, blocked until the end of human history because of Israel's rejection of Christ.⁴

Werfel's pessimism regarding Israel's condition, as revealed in this sense of unending spiritual forlornness, can be transformed into

3. The material for the above biographical sketch was drawn from a number of sources: Richard Specht, *Franz Werfel: Versuch einer Zeitspiegelung* (Berlin: Paul Zsolnay, 1926); Alma Mahler Werfel, *And the Bridge is Love* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958); Werfel, *The Song of Bernadette*, trans. Ludwig Lewisohn (New York: Viking, 1942), pp. 5-7.

4. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, pp. 205, 193.

high and serious hope only if the total history of Israel is viewed supratemporally and in direct relation to the total significance of the Incarnation.

Werfel leaves no doubt concerning his profound conviction that the Christian way is indispensable if this world, spiritually bewildered and therefore dislocated, is to be restored. There is clear evidence of this conviction as early as 1917, the year "The Christian Mission," Werfel's earliest essay in defense of the Christian view, was published.⁵ Marysia Turrian terms it "an open letter bidding farewell to all contemporary currents and, at the same time, his first public affirmation of Christianity."⁶ Annemarie von Puttkamer, on the other hand, takes it to be "a remarkable avowal of Christian teaching without knowledge of Christ."⁷ Werfel, she believes, was at this time too much swayed by modern skepticism to have accepted the total significance of the Incarnation. It would seem that her view is closer to the facts. The attraction that the Christian way had for the younger Werfel lay more in its social and ethical values than in the truth of supernatural revelation.

STRIFE IN ISRAEL

As I have said, it was not until after his journey to Jerusalem in 1925 that Werfel began to scrutinize the supernatural character of Christianity, particularly, though not always, in its relationship to the people of Israel. His visit to the Holy Land marked a radical change within him, manifest in his subsequent works, a change that culminated in an all but final acceptance of the Church's teaching.

His drama *Paul Among the Jews*, published the following year, represents the first creative result of this visit. The first, also, of a long and crowded succession of works dealing with a religious theme, it presents the climactic moment of tension and division in Israel's history. Its focus is on the conflict occasioned by Paul's return from Damascus: Filled with the convert's zeal, Paul wishes to change the heart of his people, particularly that of his illustrious teacher, the

5. See Werfel, "Die christliche Sendung: Ein offener Brief an Kurt Hiller," *Die neue Rundschau*, XXVIII, 1 (January 1917), pp. 92-105.

6. Marysia Turrian, *Dostojewskij und Franz Werfel: Vom östlichen zum westlichen Denken* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1950), p. 79.

7. Annemarie von Puttkamer, *Franz Werfel: Wort und Antwort* (Würzburg: Werkbund, 1952), p. 49.

venerable Gamaliel, a "just man of Israel."⁸ It represents, as Werfel himself says, Israel's "great tragic hour."⁹

At the play's climax, Gamaliel, moved by Paul's relentless passion, re-examines the evidence tendered at Christ's trial and discovers, on the Day of Atonement, that a miscarriage of justice has been committed against "a holy man of God," whose only offense was to have illumined the Law "very hazardingly and prematurely."¹⁰ Proposing immediate restoration of justice, he offers himself as Christ's witness in opposition to the whole Sanhedrin. But at Paul's repeated insistence that the crucified Christ is not merely a holy and heroic man, but the One who through divine charity has fulfilled the Law, Gamaliel's dispassion and serenity begin to give way to impatience and then to thunderous wrath:

PAUL: He did more than illumine the Law, Master.

GAMALIEL: No Jew can do more, Saul. . . .

PAUL: Master, an unknown Being lived and drew breath in our midst. Now we draw His breath into us with every breath we take. Understand the mystery: After this intake of breath, the lives of men are mingled with His. When I was still the old Saul, there lay between me and all creatures dead, black air—loneliness. Death was another name for the world. All joy, all fragrance of the earth was but foul and mocking death. And now? Why has loneliness vanished? What is this strong, jubilant love inside me? Whence this everlastingness in my heart that consumes all fear and decay? A transformation has come over the world . . . not even the smallest blade of grass now grows unchanged. . . . We live in the midst of the kingdom of God, and we do not know it.

GAMALIEL (*Rising*): Saul! . . . You are in the Temple. . . . We are clothed in our shrouds. . . . What has the love of your Jesus changed? Nothing! Neither did his anger. He overturned the tables of the money-changers in the Temple, and the next day they stood upright again. Neither he nor I can banish evil, only the Law can, the mysterious element we serve in order to live, the sacred tie that binds men.

PAUL: The tie has become rotten, Master. The word lies on the roadway like an empty wine-skin.

8. Cf. Werfel, *Paul Among the Jews*, trans. Paul P. Levertoff (London: Mowbray, 1928), p. 5.

9. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 150.

10. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 137.

GAMALIEL (*Controlling himself with great effort*): This man Jesus did not say that!

PAUL: You speak of a man, Master? . . . A man? Has any man yet mastered death and corruption? Has any man yet risen bodily from the dead? The light that spoke to me before Damascus, was it a man? . . . Can a man bestow renewing grace? No, Master! He was not merely a man. He wore His humanity like a garment as you and I wear these shrouds. He was the Messiah, the Shekinah incarnate, the Son of God who *was* before the world was. . . .

GAMALIEL (*Advancing toward Paul, breathing heavily*): Saul, for your sake and mine say he was a man. . . . The Messiah has not come; he is the one eternally coming. For Israel's freedom's sake, say he was a man.

PAUL: Master, by the living God I beg you: Believe! At a moment like this, I cannot lie—not for any one's sake.

GAMALIEL: Woe to you, then. Do you know who the Messiah is? He is annihilation. For when this arrow starts its whirring flight, the bow will be shattered. This I do not want to see.

PAUL (*After a fearful self-conquest, his voice low and broken*): The bow is shattered, oh Israel! And forever!

GAMALIEL: Traitor!¹¹

In obedience to this anguished impulse to see in Christ the great enemy, a divisive and destructive element imperiling the peace of Israel, Gamaliel revokes his decision to testify for Christ and turns his full wrath on Paul, in whom he sees the embodiment of "Israel's self-hatred."¹² With the sacrificial knife poised, but still troubled by a lurking shadow of doubt, Gamaliel directs a question to the God of Israel, who has never failed him, on the identity of Jesus. No answer comes, and the great structure of Gamaliel's faith begins to totter before his own eyes. Greatly bewildered, yet at the same time inspired by the first dim infusion of a mystical awareness, Gamaliel's hand releases the knife and comes to rest on Paul's head, upon whom he bestows the great blessing of the Lord. This is Gamaliel's last visible act, before darkness descends upon him and Israel, a darkness that is to remain unlifted until the "day of all days."¹³

11. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 137-141.

12. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 142.

13. Cf. Werfel, *Star of the Unborn* (New York: Viking, 1946), p. 628.

GAMALIEL: . . . Lord, what should I do? Should I commit the dreadful sin here in your Temple, at the world's most hushed hour? At this hour, when you count all souls, should I extinguish one? . . . Lord of the world. . . . Answer me now. Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Answer! What should I do? Who is Jesus whom they call the Messiah? Has the Messiah come? Have we defiled your light?

(*Paul stands pale, rigid, with eyes closed, as if in rapture.*)

GAMALIEL (*Impatiently, imperiously*): Answer! (*A long-drawn-out trumpet blast, dying away slowly, is followed by a long and profound silence.*) No answer! For the first time no answer! I am as empty as death.

PAUL (*Softly, ardently*): I have received an answer, Master. Here I am.

GAMALIEL (*Suddenly broken*): I do not know the truth anymore. Go! (*The knife falls from his hand.*)

PAUL (*Kneeling abruptly*): Take it from me, Master. Here are my people. Here is my home. What am I to accomplish in the world, I, a poor, weak Jew? (*He takes and presses Gamaliel's hand to his forehead.*) Yes, I have seen God's answer. I found myself on dusty roads. In harbors I saw ships rolling and tossing; the sailors sang. I stood in the swirling crowd of the vast city. And I kept moving, moving, moving. For Christ is a tireless hunter.

GAMALIEL (*As if from a faraway dream*): Moving, moving, moving. . . . Was this your answer?

PAUL: Now that I know it, I should like to go to sleep and be no more.

GAMALIEL (*As if in a troubled awakening*): Who are you, Jew? (*He lets his hand rest heavily on Paul's head.*) Whoever you are, man: The Lord bless thee, the Lord keep thee, the Lord make His face to shine upon thee. . . .

PAUL: You give me strength for my journey. (*Rising and moving back, his eyes fixed on Gamaliel.*) 'Setting sun of my people!' (*Exit with Barnabas.*)

GAMALIEL (*His face slowly twisting in pain, he cries out*): Destruction upon us! Destruction. . . . (*He rushes out, his face covered. Gradually, his cry dies away.*)¹⁴

In a brief postscript to *Paul Among the Jews*, Werfel indicates that the purpose of his drama had been to reveal dispassionately, through direct human action, the great turning point in Israel's sacred history. As for this claim of total detachment from his material, it

14. Cf. Werfel, *Paul Among the Jews*, pp. 143-146.

seems evident that he was by no means emotionally aloof from either the dramatic conflict or the two leading persons engaged in it. His inclination toward Paul's position is as clearly revealed as his personal admiration for the integrity and magnanimity of Gamaliel's whole nature. Moreover, his sympathy for Gamaliel's tragic dilemma is as obvious as is his understanding, coming at the climax of the play, of Paul's view of his great teacher as a symbol of Israel's decline. Werfel does not commit himself to one side against the other; he takes both sides, for the simple but compelling reason that "the struggle goes through his own soul."¹⁵

This struggle apparently came to an end in Werfel's lifetime, yet he arrived at no absolute decision, no unconditional spiritual resolution. Though he sought to die with Gamaliel and desired ultimately to be reborn with Paul in Christ, he still felt himself barred as a Jew from the full blessings of Christ and the life of the Church. He stands, then, as a great paradox in modern times: a Jew who believes in Christ but who is unable to take the final step to the side of the One who, he is convinced, can grant him what he desires most, spiritual wholeness.

BELIEFS AND MISGIVINGS

IN THE preface to *Between Heaven and Earth*, Franz Werfel recalls a personal experience he had in East Prussia, just prior to the Nazis' rise to power when, under reluctant police protection, he was driven from a lecture hall in Insterburg amid the bristling boos and catcalls of a student audience. Obsessed by fanatical party zeal, the students had become enraged by Werfel's claim that modern man's survival was inseparably linked to Christianity, a claim they construed as part of the "Jewish-Communist" plot to ruin Germany.

The precise statement that called forth their frenetic outburst is evidently one incorporated in Werfel's essay, "Can We Live Without Faith in God?" There he declares that the so-called civilized world "can be spiritually healed only if it finds the way back to genuine Christianity."¹⁶ He speaks these words with full awareness of his own

15. Puttkamer, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

16. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 120. It is worth noting that in recent times quite a few of Werfel's kinsmen, leaders in their respective realms of activity, have taken much the same position he did. There is, for instance, "the cry of

Jewish origin. As a matter of fact, he claims a special right to sound such a warning because of the close and enduring natural tie between himself, a Jew, and Christ.

THE NEED OF MODERN MAN

Werfel offers a threefold reason for the need of the present age to return to the Christian way. In the first place, he is intensely aware of what, on brief reflection, seems evident, yet must be restated time and again, namely, that the depth of Christ's teaching has as yet hardly been felt by the world. In the second place, the values, both metaphysical and moral, of all contemporary systems are immeasurably transcended by the teaching of Christ. Finally, the Christian way poses an ever-present challenge to the gross, self-seeking materialism of Western society to obey the imperative, "the sacred paradox": "Live *contrary* to your interests in behalf of truth and life!" He is certain, too, that even the secular structure of modern society can be made whole "only by a universal, world-embracing frame of faith," and "never . . . by philosophical systems, theosophical groups, sects and schismatic religions."¹⁷

This faith in the healing power of Christ's teaching remained basically unchanged by the war, even in the midst of the chaos that forced Werfel into exile and, for a time, made him homeless and exposed him to the danger of capture by the Gestapo. His arrest would certainly have ended in death, either slow and tormenting or swift and terrifying. Even the slaughter of countless members of his

the young Jewish thinker, Paul Landsberg, that our world will be swallowed by chaos unless it 'takes the Christian revelation for its helmsman.' " Two years prior to Landsberg's death at the hands of the Nazis, the young French-Jewish writer, Simone Weil, remarked that "our obligation for the next two or three years . . . is to show the public the possibility of a truly incarnated Christianity. In all the history now known there has never been a period in which souls have been in such peril as they are today." Edith Stein, Carmelite nun, poet, philosopher, and mystic, offered herself to Christ on Passion Sunday 1939—a few months before the outbreak of war—"as a sacrificial expiation for the sake of true peace." In August 1942, on the way to her death in a Nazi concentration camp, she wrote: "I am quite content. . . . One can only learn a *Scientia Crucis* if one feels the Cross in one's own person. I was convinced of this from the very first and have said with all my heart: *Ave crux, spes unica!*" (John M. Oesterreicher, *Walls Are Crumbling*, New York: Devin-Adair, 1952, p. xiii; Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, trans. Emma Craufurd, New York: Putnam, 1951, pp. 75-76; Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto, O.D.C., *Edith Stein*, trans. Cecily Hastings and Donald Nicholl, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1952, pp. 212, 218.)

17. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, pp. 120-121.

people, even the demons, the forces of ice-cold evil turned loose or on the verge of being loosed on the world, could not alter his faith.¹⁸

Clearly, Werfel does not find Christianity as a religion wanting, that is, Christianity as a way of life informed and shaped by a unique kind of supernatural revelation. For him its essence, as embodied in the person and teaching of Christ, is what it always was: the great, in fact, the world's only redeeming power in the spiritual, but also in the temporal order.¹⁹ Thus it is not the true Christian vision but the torch of Christendom that has grown dim because men are often ignorant, indifferent, uncharitable; because they are, in other words, too frequently opposed to their essential nature, betraying their deepest trust as human beings. Since contemporary man is "emancipated" and in many ways nihilistic, the whole structure of Christian society has been deeply shaken. And this weakening is at the heart of the modern tragedy.²⁰

This is not to say, however, that Werfel despairs of the possibility of the world's regeneration. He is skeptical only to the extent that he sees things realistically. Obviously not a romantic utopian who looks at the world through a rose-colored telescope, he is at the same time by no means a pessimist, taking a murky and microscopic view of things and then ponderously issuing pronouncements on man's progressive degeneracy. To be sure, in the very midst of the war he cries out with profound concern that "the great, historical exorcism, called Christianity, seems to be retreating more and more day after day, and the demons with a shrill confusion of voices are bursting their chains."²¹ But almost in the same breath he gives voice to hope, which is the more authentic and wonderful in that it sprang from the very depths of his anguish over the suffering of his people:

The naturalistic epoch, whose political creed resided *everywhere* in socialistic nationalism, admonished the individual: "Man, be yourself!" The next epoch, just dawning, for which no name has been found but which endeavors to unify complex patterns, is preparing to teach: "Man, be yourself *and* your opposite!" This is an exalted doctrine that may enthrone Christianity, so gravely weakened, once again.²²

18. See *ibid.*, p. 214.

19. See *ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

20. See *ibid.*, p. 120.

21. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 214.

22. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 226.

CHRIST AND THE CROSS

Only a brief survey of Werfel's "Theologumena" is necessary to determine his fundamental attitude toward the significance of Jesus. It is his oft-repeated and unshakable conviction that Jesus is Israel's true Messiah, the Second Person of the Trinity, God-made-man. In Werfel's words, though not those of the Church: "The Son is that essence of God who does not contemplate Himself as does the Father, but is concerned exclusively with the world as the first and uncreated and yet incarnate Word above all words."²³

In a section of the "Theologumena," entitled "Of Christ and Israel," he discusses briefly and then illustrates in some detail "The Doctrine of Correspondences," a name used to indicate the close kinship between the Old Testament and the New. In considering step by step how the Joseph story prophetically foreshadows the critical events in the life of Jesus, he unfolds the parallel between the overwhelming but joyful moment when Joseph throws off his disguise and makes himself known to his brothers and the day when, after long and anguished separation, Christ despised, rejected, and risen will utter to Israel the dramatic words: "I am Jesus, your Brother, the Messiah. . . ." ²⁴

Werfel thinks that the most fascinating part of this parallel will be revealed after the joyous reunion between Jesus and the Jewish people. Just as Joseph granted his brothers a free deed of land, so will Christ one day bring all of Israel into His Church. And as the Land of Goshen was independent of the other Egyptian provinces, so Israel will not lose her identity but be preserved to bear witness to Him.²⁵

The same part of the "Theologumena" contains a clear and simple declaration that leaves no doubt of Werfel's stand on the question of Christ's divinity. It also reveals his belief in the reality of an unbroken Judaeo-Christian tradition; for him the living God, transcendent and immanent, makes Himself known to man by means of a unique revelation:

Jesus was not born of Greeks or Indians, but of Jews. The question here, however, and this is the heart of the matter, is not so much one of

23. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 144.

24. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 209.

25. See *ibid.*, p. 210.

consanguinity as of conformity and conspiratoriality. Our Father in heaven, of whom the "nations" speak, is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who revealed Himself on Sinai, who spoke to the prophets, to Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, who became Man and died on Golgotha. In an unbroken climax, this God revealed Himself to His people with whom He carries on an unending dialogue even to this day. In Israel's soul alone, from Abraham to Jesus, was the knowledge of this God pre-formed. Because of a mysterious conformity, Israel's soul was and is the concave mirror that reflects the rays of this Deity into the *camera obscura* of this world. . . . Israel not only was but still continues to be the mother-of-pearl, just as Christ continues to be the pearl.²⁶

Accepting the Incarnation as the crucial doctrine of faith, without which Christianity sinks to the level of a mere socio-ethical system, Werfel dwells with special interest and attachment on this mystery. He deals with it in various ways, as if he wished at least to touch on its many aspects, even though unable to fathom its ultimate secret.

"God assumed human form," he writes, "in order to carry it to an absurdity by raising it to glory."²⁷ God, in other words, became man in order to suffer death in the basest manner so that man, beholding Him crucified, His immaculate human form broken and on the point of turning into dust, may himself be so humbled that he cannot but cry out at the awesome spectacle of human frailty in some such manner as did Lear at the sight of the almost naked Edgar in a madman's disguise: "Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art."²⁸

Filled thereby with the awareness of his own frailty and unshelteredness, of his inescapable mortality,²⁹ man may, all at once or little

26. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 197-198. Werfel, in designating Israel's original mission as "the great paradox" to the Gentiles to "live counter to [their] sinful nature," concludes by asserting that "Christ is also, in addition to everything else that He is, the fulfillment of this mission of Israel." (Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 196-197.)

27. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 214. It may be interesting to compare Werfel's thought with Catholic teaching as expressed by Garrigou-Lagrange: "[Christ's] humanity is a conscious, free, and superior instrument, ever united to the divinity in order to communicate to us all the graces . . . merited for us on the cross. Thus every illumination of the intellect, every grace of attraction, of consolation, or of strength . . . actually comes to us from the sacred humanity." (*The Three Ages of the Interior Life: Prelude of Eternal Life*, trans. Sister M. Timothea Doyle, O.P., St. Louis: Herder, 1947, I, 111.) See also: "Christ's humanity . . . is the road which . . . leads souls to His divinity." (*Ibid.*, p. 118.)

28. *King Lear*, Act III, scene iv.

29. As Garrigou-Lagrange puts it, "in Gethsemane Christ, who was about to expiate all our sins, willed to be sorrowful even unto death to make us understand the sorrow we should have for our own sins." (*Op. cit.*, p. 325.)

by little, come to understand and then act on the knowledge that his condition, real and fearful though it is, is ultimately absorbed into the agony of the Crucified who by His suffering and victory conquered death once and for all. Man, Werfel seems to say, when rightly contemplating the Crucifixion, becomes acutely aware that he is born of dust and will fall back to dust, but that he is at the same time infinitely illuminable because a poor handful of dust once "really took in the sun."³⁰

According to Werfel, God, the very essence of integrity and incorruptibility, God the immutable and timeless,³¹ steps down into time and mortality

not only to redeem the world but in *His very own interest* to experience death and, in the supernatural order, to renew and sanctify even death which, in the natural sense, is but the vile odor of corruption. Through God Himself the rattling skeleton of death is robed in purple, and on his naked skull is poised the golden crown.³²

Aside from its aesthetic impact, this statement might well be taken as an expression of the traditional Christian view of the final meaning of the Incarnation and the Cross. Yet the underlined phrase: "His very own interest" (the emphasis is Werfel's), points to an idea or, at least, a wording that is not quite as traditional: God's purity and incorruptibility prevent Him from sharing man's profound experience of suffering and death. Hence, to put it in human terms, driven by an impatient love for His creatures and by a longing to share in their deepest experience, the Creator "violates" the law of His own nature in order to expose Himself to mortality.

Werfel considers the Incarnation to be not only a gracious act of divine charity but at the same time a supremely reasonable and necessary one on the part of God, an act, however, by no means determined by the necessity of God's nature.³³ On the contrary, the

30. Robert Frost, "Sitting by a Bush in Broad Sunlight," *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, 1949), p. 342.

31. See Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, pp. 144-145.

32. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 145.

33. Here Werfel thinks like a Catholic. Karl Adam writes: "When the Absolute expresses itself in time, when God's eternal decrees take temporal form, it cannot but be that human imperfection should come into inward conflict with divine perfection. In this respect Schopenhauer, and before him Schelling, and later Hartmann have judged correctly. Those philosophers erred only in this that they attributed God's entrance into time, not to be a free and loving act of the personal God, but to a neces-

Incarnation, Werfel insists, must be seen as an incomparably voluntary act, an act issuing from the source of infinite freedom.³⁴ To be sure, in his explanation, he employs the term *Notwendigkeit*, "necessity," but he makes divine reason the author of this necessity. The Incarnation, then, is a free act, in harmony with "logical necessity": God loves man because God is supremely good. He therefore desires man to be ultimately happy, despite all the hostile forces deeply imbedded in life and in man himself, apparently operating against such a design.³⁵ The way to happiness is knowledge of God. But this way is blocked by the very nature of God who is pure, uncreated Being and, as such, is incomprehensible to man.³⁶ Hence God becomes man—"the *Mysterium Magnum*, which lay in God's plan of redemption from the beginning." He does so in order to reveal Himself unmistakably as God, so that man, filled with renewed confidence and hope, may begin to know Him through this divine love-sacrifice and learn to love and worship Him in return.³⁷

ISRAEL: THE WITNESS

In her study of Werfel, Annemarie von Puttkamer expresses the conviction that "the determining factor" in Werfel's failure to take the final step toward Christianity was his notion that Israel must remain a living witness of Christ.³⁸ That his works provide strong internal evidence in favor of this argument is undeniable.

There are, to begin with, two pointed questions in the "Theologoumena" section of *Between Heaven and Earth*, which despite their brevity are given the weight of a whole paragraph: "What would Israel be without the Church? And what would the Church be without Israel?"³⁹ One cannot exaggerate the importance Werfel attached to God's being. And so they went on to conclude that creation was the Fall of God." (*The Spirit of Catholicism*, trans. Justin McCann, O.S.B., Image Books; New York: Doubleday, 1954, p. 230.)

34. See Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 157.

35. See *ibid.*, pp. 160, 179, 235-236, 171.

36. To quote Karl Adam again: "Since men cannot grasp the glory of God in its naked immediacy, but only in a mirror, only in *enigmas*, only in the broken forms of the human and finite, there was needed a movement from God, a divine illumination, a new and profounder vision, in order that man might pierce the created veils and with absolute certainty recognize the divine in Jesus" (*op. cit.*, p. 51).

37. See Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, in the following order: pp. 197, 149, 164, 196, 181, 189.

38. See Puttkamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162.

39. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 200.

to Israel's role as a witness in the flesh. It is no extravagance to state that the possibility and thus the fear of Israel's eventual disappearance from the stage of history through persecution, through assimilation, and particularly through a turning to Christianity, seems to have struck him with such force that this anxious question became part of his theological meditations.

Elsewhere in Werfel's work there is ample evidence of his great concern with Israel's testimonial role and of the importance of his people's survival, if for no other purpose than to carry out this role. The very first words in the subsection of the "Theologumena" entitled "On Christ and Israel" deal directly with the need for Israel's survival.

If Christ is the truth and the life, then the Jews are the indestructible witness in the flesh of this truth. Without this living witness that moves through the whole world, persecuted and scourged, Christ would sink down into a mere myth, like Apollo or Dionysos.⁴⁰

The anxiety behind these thoughts is undiminished in the words Rabbi Aladar Fürst addresses to Ottokar Felix, a Catholic chaplain, in Werfel's *The True Story of the Restored Cross*. It is the story of a graveyard cross, changed by Nazi storm troopers into a swastika and then restored to its original shape by the rabbi, who pays with his life for his courage and act of homage. These are the rabbi's words:

I do not know . . . why the Church places such value on converting the Jews. . . . What would happen if all the Jews in the world had themselves baptized? Israel would disappear. And thus the only real, physical witness of divine revelation would vanish from the world. The holy Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, would sink into an empty and impotent legend like one of the myths of ancient Egypt and Greece. Does the Church not realize this mortal danger? Especially at this moment of world-wide dissolution? We belong together . . . but we are not one. In the Epistle to the Romans it is written that the community of Christ is rooted in Israel. I am convinced that as long as the Church stands, Israel will stand, but also that the Church will have to fall if Israel falls.⁴¹

In response to the chaplain's curiosity about the source of his ideas, Rabbi Fürst says that they issue "from our suffering up to the present

40. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 193.

41. Werfel, *Die wahre Geschichte vom wiederhergestellten Kreuz*, p. 10.

day. Or do you perchance believe that God would have permitted us to endure and survive for so many centuries to no purpose?"⁴² For Werfel, then, Israel's destiny, particularly since the Crucifixion, is to be not only a living, but also a suffering witness. To illuminate the purpose of this suffering he chooses not the medium of words but that of action. By following the law of "the sacred paradox," Rabbi Fürst reveals the meaning of going the whole "way of sorrow," that is, of remaining true to his role of bearing witness to the Cross.

As I have mentioned, Werfel thinks of the "sacred paradox" as an imperative that can be carried out only in strenuous action, outward or inward: "Live *contrary* to your [selfish] interests for the truth and the life!"⁴³ The process by which many of his characters fulfill this law constitutes a striking pattern manifest in most of his major works. In the unfolding of this pattern, Jews frequently stand out heroically, though often tragically, as indicated in words Christ addresses to Israel in one of Werfel's poems:

*And then I walked the road of sorrow to its very end
And you, you too, will walk it to its end.*⁴⁴

Between Heaven and Earth frequently refers to Israel's testimonial role and its inseparable link to suffering. In one particular passage, Werfel speaks of Israel as "bearing a negative witness to Christ on earth through its suffering of persecution and dispersal." The starkness of this condition is softened only when viewed under the aspect of eternity. As Werfel sees it, "in the last trial beyond history" Israel will become "the chief witness in a positive sense, when the infinite Father-and-Son love of God will be ultimately revealed, for the promise made to Abraham is still valid."⁴⁵

In his final book, *Star of the Unborn*, there is another statement about Israel's testimonial role and its duration that is reminiscent of the one given by Rabbi Fürst. But unlike Fürst, Saul, the defender of Judaism, is filled with deep hostility toward the Church for having, as he believes, violated the purity of Hebraic monotheism through an illogical and incomprehensible trinitarianism.⁴⁶ Also unlike Fürst, he

42. Cf. *ibid.*

43. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 120.

44. Werfel, "Mysterium der Auserwählung Israels," *Gedichte aus den Jahren 1908-1945* (Los Angeles: Privatdruck der Pazifischen Presse, 1946), pp. 115-116.

45. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, pp. 202-203.

46. See Werfel, *Star of the Unborn*, pp. 255-256.

holds that the Church's survival is dependent on Israel but not Israel's on the Church; moreover, that it is the Church's role to bear witness to the patriarchs: "The Church will live as long as we live, in order to testify for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were the first to acknowledge the true God."⁴⁷

In an earlier novel, *Barbara* (1929), Werfel portrays a Jew captivated by Christ. Though temperamentally somewhat like Saul, Alfred Engländer is, in his religious outlook, much closer to Aladar Fürst. Engländer and Fürst have a profound respect for the two religions. They are not only aware of the common, divine origin of both, but they also accept without question the messianic tradition. Engländer, however, goes far beyond Fürst in approaching the Christian view, stopping only one step short of baptism. He also goes much farther than Fürst in his desire to see a cessation of all hostility between Israel and Christianity. Both agree that the two religions belong together, though Fürst is careful to note that there is no actual unity between the two. Engländer, on the other hand, states categorically that "Israel and Christ are one."⁴⁸ Not content with a mere declaration, he puts his belief into practice by attempting to unite Christianity and Judaism through a well-intentioned but impractical scheme, the failure of which contributes to his final madness.

It may well be that Engländer's madness and his disappearance without trace are intended to warn both Israel and Christianity that a "merger" would mean the disappearance of the one and the fading into myth of the other. In contrast to this warning is Engländer's joyous vision of the future before his reconciliation plan fails. "Can you imagine what it means," he asks, "to fuse Israel and Christ after nineteen hundred years of enmity? A new era would dawn upon the earth!"⁴⁹

There is irony in the fact that Engländer's view is much more in accord with the Church's vision than is Werfel's:

On the spiritual level, the drama of love between Israel and its God . . . which is but one element in the universal mystery of salvation, will be resolved only in the reconciliation of the Synagogue and the

47. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

48. Werfel, *Barbara oder die Frömmigkeit* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 1929), p. 515. Cf. *The Pure in Heart*, trans. Geoffrey Dunlop (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931), p. 391.

49. Werfel, *Barbara*, p. 525. Cf. *The Pure in Heart*, pp. 398-399.

Church. . . . Nothing requires us to think that the resolution will come at the end of human history, rather than at the beginning of a new age for the Church and the world.⁵⁰

So says Maritain, strangely paralleling, in part at least, the very words of Engländer, whose mind fails when he discovers the failure of a task unachievable by man alone.

BETRAYER AND BETRAYED

In Werfel's "Theologumena," discussion of Israel's testimonial role is preceded by a passage that deals with the perilous consequences to the individual Jew who formally embraces the Christian faith. The Jew who is baptized, declares Werfel categorically, is a deserter in three ways. He is, first of all, a deserter "in a secular sense," since he forsakes a weak, defenseless, suffering people. Secondly, he turns away from "the people of God" and from its deepest origin, from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Most important of all, the Jew who goes to the baptismal font "deserts Christ Himself since he arbitrarily interrupts his historical suffering—the penance for the rejection of the Messiah. . . ." ⁵¹

In elucidating the Catholic position, Maritain holds unequivocally that the individual Jew who believes in Christ is not barred from the Church till the end of historical time. Not only is the road to the baptismal font never blocked, the call of faith is always a call here and now. A Jew who becomes a Christian is in no way a traitor; on the contrary, "for a Jew to become a Christian is a double victory: his people triumphs in him. Woe to the Jew—and to the Christian—who is pleasing to men! . . . Jews who become [spiritually] like others become worse than others. [But] when a Jew receives Christian grace, he is less than ever like others: he has found *his* Messiah." ⁵²

In his belief that Jews are temporally barred from the sacrament of rebirth, Werfel also goes counter to St. Paul in whom he sees his "great teacher." ⁵³ In *Barbara*, Engländer says of himself: "According to the flesh I am a Jew, according to the spirit a Christian, like the Apostle Paul whom I understand as I do myself. And this is

50. Jacques Maritain, *Ransoming the Time*, trans. Harry Lorin Binsse (New York: Scribner's, 1941), p. 169.

51. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, pp. 199–200.

52. Maritain, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 165.

53. Puttkamer, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

where the problem lies." ⁵⁴ Engländer's problem is also Werfel's. Both are, of course, aware that St. Paul, after his own change of heart, not only experienced "great sadness and continuous sorrow" on behalf of his "kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom 9:2-3), but that he also ardently desired their turning to Christ, as a community at a given moment in the unforeseeable future and as individuals at *any* moment (see Rom 11:13-14, 25-29). If not Engländer, then surely Werfel is in the painful and paradoxical position of having to condemn St. Paul as a betrayer of the One the three worship as the true Redeemer. For Werfel maintains that the "Jew who steps to the baptismal font deserts Christ Himself." ⁵⁵

Ultimately, Engländer reproaches himself for not "stepping to the side of the Redeemer." ⁵⁶ Indeed, there is no scriptural evidence to support Werfel's contention that, "according to the Redeemer's will," the Jew as an individual is not permitted to take this step, "here and now." ⁵⁷ In fact, all scriptural evidence points in the opposite direction.

ENCOUNTER BY LETTER

On October 27, 1942, about five months after *The Song of Bernadette* appeared in its English translation, Werfel addressed a letter to Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel of New Orleans. Written in reply to one the Archbishop had sent him a week earlier, Werfel stated why, despite his devotion to the Church, he still remained *extra muros*, outside her walls. The complete letter reads:

Your Excellency:

May I express my sincere gratefulness for your kind letter of October 20 and for giving me the opportunity to clarify my position in this question of vital importance for me:

I am, as stated in the foreword of *The Song of Bernadette*, a Jew by origin and have never been baptized. On the other hand, I wish to profess here before you and the world that, as is evident from the major part of my work, I have been decisively influenced and molded by the spiritual forces of Christianity and the Catholic Church. I see in the Holy Catholic Church the purest power and emanation sent by God to this earth to fight the evil of materialism and atheism, and to bring revelation to the

54. Werfel, *Barbara*, p. 513.

55. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 200.

56. Werfel, *Barbara*, p. 514. Cf. *The Pure in Heart*, p. 389.

57. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 200.

poor soul of mankind. That is why, although standing *extra muros*, I have made it my purpose to support with my modest and humble abilities the struggle which the Catholic Church fights against these evils and for the divine truth.

Very properly your Excellency will ask why, despite such convictions which I cherish since my early youth, I keep standing *extra muros*. To this I have to give three answers.

The first: Israel is going through the hour of its most inexorable persecution. I could not bring myself to sneak out of the ranks of the persecuted in this hour. My second answer follows from the first: Conversion brings certain advantages to the Jew. This was especially so in Europe. I did not wish to create the shadow of a doubt that I wanted to gain such advantages.

The third answer is the most important, concerning my own soul: Israel belongs, theologically, as the vessel of revelation and salvation, among the *mysteria magna*. Christians, and even the Church which calls itself the New Israel, have, in the course of history and in present times, in their practical policy, not always shown full justice to the old Israel. As long as there are anti-Semitic Christians (and even priests like Father Coughlin, preaching hatred and yet not excommunicated) the converted Jew must feel embarrassed by the impression of cutting a not altogether pleasant figure.

I have endeavored to say the whole truth and hope your Excellency will not resent my frankness. Should I have erred, I shall be glad to receive in humility your Excellency's correction. Permit me to close with the promise that I shall not cease to write books like *The Song of Bernadette* which will strive to praise the glory of the supernatural.

I leave to your Excellency to make use of this letter as you will see fit.

With renewed thanks for your great benevolence I beg to remain your Excellency's obedient servant in Christ.⁵⁸

The first of the three reasons Werfel listed in this letter for remaining outside the Church corresponds exactly to the first part of the passage I have quoted from the "Theologumena": "A Jew who steps to the baptismal font . . . deserts, in a secular sense, from the

58. Part of this letter appeared in *Time*, in its issue of January 4, 1943, p. 68. Since the whole excerpt was taken from the first half of the letter only, the three reasons listed by Werfel as to why he chose not to enter the Church were excluded. Permission to publish the letter for the first time in its entirety was granted through the courtesy of Mrs. Alma Mahler-Werfel and Professor Adolf D. Klarmann, University of Pennsylvania, Werfel's editor and literary executor.

side of the weak and persecuted."⁵⁹ Conspicuously missing is any reference to the climax of his declaration in the "Theologumena":

But in the third place the Jew who steps to the baptismal font deserts Christ Himself in that he interrupts of his own free will his historical suffering—the penance for rejecting the Messiah—and, in a hasty manner not foreseen in the drama of redemption, steps to the side of the Redeemer where he *perhaps*, according to the sacred will of the Redeemer, does not really belong, at least . . . not here and now.⁶⁰

These words represent a conviction Werfel held at least as late as 1943, a year or more after his letter to the Archbishop of New Orleans. They are echoed in another passage of the "Theologumena," the one in which he speaks of four routes of "no escape" for Israel from temporal perplexity, the last of which he calls "the way to Christ." It is a way that is blocked, he claims, by two kinds of obstacles, "secular obstacles and . . . obstacles of a deeper knowledge." By the latter he means barriers that baffle his own limited "power and wisdom," difficulties within his soul that are not easily identified.⁶¹

It would seem that in the later years of Werfel's life the secular obstacles, though they have their own momentary urgency for him, withdraw more and more from the center of his attention toward the periphery. Of the sacred obstacles, the notion that a Jew does not really belong to the company of the Redeemer became the crucial one. This strain in Werfel's relationship to Christ does not imply that he had any doubt about the truth of the Incarnation. Something more difficult to realize was involved: a last reluctance, a holding back from an encounter for some reason unknown to himself. "I have touched upon a mystery and I fear I have neither the power nor the wisdom to fathom it rightly."⁶²

In spite of the reasons for his inability or persistent refusal to take the final step toward Christ, in spite of the evident or secret doubts about his own position,⁶³ even in spite of his occasionally quite critical attitude toward Christendom and the Church (because of "their

59. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 199.

60. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 200. (Emphasis added.)

61. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 205.

62. Cf. *ibid.*

63. See, for example, the element of doubt introduced into the passage quoted on the preceding page by the one stressed word.

practical policy"), Werfel's devotion to the latter was deep and enduring: "I see in the Holy Catholic Church the purest power and emanation sent by God to this earth . . . to bring revelation to the poor soul of mankind."⁶⁴

THE FINAL SEARCH

A FEW years later, shortly before his death, Franz Werfel had another encounter, or rather a series of encounters, with a high dignitary of the Church, who also searched the poet's soul, only more probingly. The occasion was different, and so was the setting, for through his imagination the event is projected into the remote future, the year 101,945 A.D. It takes place against the background of a utopian world, a seductive world, from which almost all the elements that thwart the individual and the common good have been eliminated. In *Star of the Unborn*, Werfel, in the person of the narrator F. W., painfully submits to formal exorcism under the eyes of the "Grand Bishop." But it never occurs to the Grand Bishop to ask F. W. why, despite his strong Catholic convictions, he still stands *extra muros*. It may well be that there is no longer any need to pose the question since exorcism is a preparation for baptism. Following the ceremony F. W. partakes of bread and wine for which, so he says, he had "a very great longing."⁶⁵

It does not seem unlikely that Werfel alludes here to an inward longing for the Eucharist, just as F. W.'s submission to a long and arduous exorcism might well signify Werfel's own intense desire for acceptance into the Church.⁶⁶ In any event, there is little doubt that this novel is deeply personal and confessional. *Star of the Unborn* is, in fact, a final recapitulation of many of the major themes in Werfel's other works.

At the beginning of his unexpected exorcism, he complies with the request of the father exorcist to make the sign of the cross. This he does obediently and precisely, as if it were habitual with him. The sign of the cross, he is undoubtedly aware, represents "the most important of the sacramentals," an outward means of stirring inward

64. From the letter to Archbishop Rummel, *loc. cit.*

65. Cf. Werfel, *Star of the Unborn*, p. 236; see also p. 640.

66. See Adolf D. Klarmann, "Allegory in Werfel's *Das Opfer* and *Jacobowsky and the Colonel*," *Germanic Review*, XX (October 1945), 195-217.

devotion. The act and the words accompanying it constitute a swift but nonetheless profound condensation of the Church's belief in the triune God and in the redemption of man through the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ.⁶⁷ Werfel must have understood the full significance of this religious act as a public profession of faith.⁶⁸ Thus by having F. W. solemnly make the sign of the cross he manifests his inner conviction about the most central and sacred doctrines of Christianity.

DEATH: PURSUER AND WOOER

Star of the Unborn is in a very literal sense the final confession of a man aware that, for him, time is swiftly running out. What one commentator says of Werfel's *Embezzled Heaven* (1939) is also true, but in a much more intimate sense, of this last novel: "The protagonist of this book is death."⁶⁹

This literary testament was completed on August 17, 1945, nine days before Werfel died. Since 1939 he had been aware that he was marked for an early end; in 1943 when he began work on *Star of the Unborn*, death had become his relentless pursuer.⁷⁰ It was quite natural, then, that this novel should be preoccupied with the problem of mortality, as conceived and worked out in a utopian world and in its relation to the Christian faith.

In *Star of the Unborn*, the man of the future, possessing highly developed scientific techniques, conquers death through the painless "process" of retrogenesis; thus the human body is directed backward, step by step, to the embryonic state, to its first (or rather its last) heartbeat. Retrogenesis conquers death by avoiding it. The goal is a kind of vegetal felicity: Man becomes a fragrant, blooming daisy instead of a stinking carcass. This is advanced humanity's greatest accomplishment for man. It is even more amazing than a supernatural miracle, for it is scientific and tantalizingly "humane," so much so that Werfel, in the person of F. W., doomed to die shortly, is mo-

67. See *The Catholic Encyclopedia Dictionary* (New York: Gilmary Society, 1941), pp. 844, 889.

68. Annemarie von Puttkamer speaks of Werfel as an "untiring reader" of both the Old Testament and the New, whose knowledge of them was sound and whose information on theological matters "astonishingly deep and comprehensive" (*op. cit.*, pp. 151, 104).

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

70. See *ibid.*, pp. 104, 116; also Alma Mahler Werfel, *op. cit.*, pp. 245, 282.

mentarily tempted, as it were, by his own fictional invention to seek this easy way out.⁷¹

His long and bitter struggle to escape this seductive but dehumanizing avoidance of death in the subterranean Wintergarden is sustained by the memory that for him death is "the sacred ordinance of God which man must not tamper with."

I have no desire to choose and control my death by my own free will, even though this control may be a sign of incalculable progress, as many believe. It is, of course, quite pretty to end as a daisy, white and pure. But the way to that goal is too risky for me, when I think of the "Catabolites" [the monstrous specimens of failure in the retrogenetic process]. Death stands *behind* me! I am not afraid of him, because I have already made his acquaintance. But I do not want him to stand *before* me.⁷²

These words, spoken by the central character, are no doubt Werfel's, expressing his reconciliation to the idea of a natural death and the near approach of his own. F. W. speaks the words after he has escaped the dangers of the lake of Light Water, the purpose of which is to lethargize man's memory, simply by evacuating its images, actual and potential, so that the human soul may sink into happy forgetfulness—a process Werfel calls "the epitome of all the sins man could possibly commit."⁷³

The ordinance of death is not only divinely decreed, he believes, but also divinely exemplified through Christ who for all time showed man a different way to conquer death—indeed, a way vastly different from the utopian process. Not by any blasphemous attempt to escape death forever but by voluntarily accepting and suffering it at the destined moment can man transcend it. To become a daisy or a geranium may be an aesthetic notion but only in facing death can man, according to Werfel, imitate "divine integrity and incorruptibility." Only in this way can he hope to remain or to become truly human.⁷⁴

Werfel's attitude toward death is clearly meant to be taken in a Christian sense, as disclosed by the way Io-Runt, the intrepid young

71. See Werfel, *Star of the Unborn*, pp. 493-495.

72. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 579.

73. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 573, 574.

74. See Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 144; also *Star of the Unborn*, pp. 559-560.

star rover, sacrifices his life for the benefit of man. Voluntarily he accepts true suffering and death in preference to the spurious "death of death" in the Wintergarden and thus ushers in a new era of hope for the world, the hope that man will henceforth begin to follow his example, and so kill "poor death" and "wake eternally."⁷⁵

Toward the end of F. W.'s visit to the utopian world, as he is sitting in the Grand Bishop's library discussing ways and means of returning to his own century, news arrives of the death of the gravely injured star dancer. In announcing the sad event the messenger uses Christ's final words on the cross: "It is consummated" (Jn 19:30).⁷⁶

Thus Werfel's last novel repeats the heroic pattern that is one of the dominant elements in his works. In obedience to the law of the "sacred paradox," the young star dancer, careless of himself, salvages from the wreckage of civilization mankind's most precious possession: the so-called Isochronion, containing "the future of the human spirit . . . the price of his sacrifice."⁷⁷

Io-Runt exercises so quickening an influence on F. W.'s imagination that for a fleeting moment he identifies him with the Isochronion itself. Symbolically, it represents the heavenly man who, in spite of his omneity, his allness, descends upon earth and briefly dwells in time, revealing his capacity for redemptive suffering.⁷⁸

To make the analogy complete, the death of Io-Runt is miraculously followed by a renaissance that fills F. W. with a radiant kind of joy. The happiness he experiences is twofold: First, a being to whom he is deeply devoted, is not dead;⁷⁹ second, he is to be conducted safely back home by the requickened star dancer, a "genius in orientation" for whom even "the heavens are not big enough to get lost in."⁸⁰

75. See Werfel, *Star of the Unborn*, p. 513; also John Donne, "Holy Sonnets," X, *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne and the Complete Poetry of William Blake* (New York: Random House, 1946), p. 239.

76. Cf. Werfel, *Star of the Unborn*, p. 641.

77. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 621. The so-called Isochronion is described as a small metal capsule with straps on either side, looking like a Jewish phylactery. F. W. speculates that it contains a complicated formula, a drop of essence, or a grain of drug. In any case, its contact with a human forehead had such an effect that "the earthly, tiny dissimulaneity . . . could flow into the great simultaneity of the cosmos." It seems to be an instrument, in Werfel's utopian world, whereby the earthman's consciousness can be attuned to the "universal consciousness of the celestial man" (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 618-620).

78. See *ibid.*, pp. 619-620.

79. See *ibid.*, p. 645.

80. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 631.

SWIFT RESCUERS

But before he can be rescued, F. W. makes a confession to the Grand Bishop, the only one who at that moment can help him. His admission of being lost marks the climax of his deliverance: He goes to the Church for spiritual aid, and the Church, in turn, leads him to his deliverer.

The first step in this process of restoration, however, had been taken some time earlier by F. W. himself, on the first day of his three-day visit to the utopian world. His profession of faith in the Incarnation through the sign of the cross, freely made in the Catholic cathedral of the utopian world, had placed him under the protection of that cross. The sign of the cross the Grand Bishop draws over his head, as he dismisses him immediately before his departure for home, commits him finally into the hands of the deliverer. Thus F. W. enters and leaves this strange world ringed round by Christ's mercy. On two significant occasions, F. W. discovers that sacred mercy "plays . . . about man's beating heart" so as to "baffle death,"⁸¹ twice rescuing him from mortal danger: once from foundering during his fabulous experience on the planet Jupiter; and then from suffering a flowery but everlasting death in the Wintergarden.

The experience on Jupiter marks the second, or intermediate, step in this redintegrative series. Thrown off balance by the enormous gravitational pull of the planet, F. W. is at the same time caught in a roaring tempest on a vast mountainous sea of molten metal. When human knowledge and skill give him no support, he turns his attention upward in panic. "At the very last moment," he says of this experience, "I thought of the sacred power that had saved my life more than once, and for the first time since the creation of the world human lips spoke on this vast, unstable planet the Latin words: *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.*"⁸² At this point angels suddenly come and save him.

As his rescuers take leave of him, he discovers that they are on their way to the *Rosarium Virginis* where he imagines them in attendance

81. Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe," *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 101.

82. Cf. Werfel, *Star of the Unborn*, p. 314.

upon "the earth-woman from whom had issued the spirit who through his suffering and death had freed God in man and man in God."⁸³ F. W.'s experience is more than a mere product of the imagination. In fact, it seems to go beyond the realm of personal belief to that of actual knowledge. When asked, some time later, whether or not he believes in Mary, his reply is unequivocal. "*Believe* is the wrong word . . . in my case for I *know* that she has helped me wherever she may dwell."⁸⁴

This confession is hardly startling, coming as it does from one who is so convinced of the Incarnation that he, a Jew, simply accepts Christ as God and man, miraculously born of a Jewish maiden of Nazareth. He has no doubt that Christ is the fulfillment of Israel's original mission and that the "Father in heaven, of whom the 'nations' speak, is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who revealed Himself on Sinai, who spoke to the prophets Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, who became man and died on Golgotha."⁸⁵

DEATH: AN OPENING

ALTHOUGH Werfel's attention in *Star of the Unborn* is continually engaged by the theme of death, he does not stop there. For he can say—and he does so frequently and variously—that "God assumed human form in order to carry it to absurdity by raising it to glory."⁸⁶ Death, he knows, is nothingness, but not in the modern nihilistic sense of emptiness.⁸⁷ On the contrary, death is for Werfel an opening, a gateway to *something*, as he suggests not long before his own death: "How could we die if we were not immortal?"⁸⁸

Thus in his last two works a long-held conviction is deepened and strengthened, the conviction that "the God of Abraham . . . who became man and died on Golgotha" has annihilated the emptiness and

83. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 320.

84. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 472.

85. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 197.

86. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 214.

87. "The Existentialists take the road to Calvary. But arriving there they find the place empty except for two thieves dying on their crosses." (Helmut Kuhn, *Encounter with Nothingness: An Essay on Existentialism*, Chicago: Regnery, 1949, p. xi; see also Werfel's assertion that *naturalistic nihilism* is the "all-pervading modern state of consciousness," *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 88.)

88. Cf. Werfel, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 219.

meaninglessness of death. This conviction gives him courage for his own encounter with death.⁸⁹ It could well be—who can say?—that this conviction also served in giving reality to his hope, long before the time he reckoned, of “contemplating God,” which he calls “the highest possible act of identification, a supernatural mode of being entirely I and entirely you,” an identification “from which issues boundless felicity.”⁹⁰

Between Heaven and Earth, from which these words are taken, is a direct, contemplative preparation for *Star of the Unborn*. Both reveal an acceptance of death as well as of life, each a “perfect gift . . . from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration” (Jas 1:17).

EDITOR'S NOTE

SCHOLAR that he is, Mr. Ellert faithfully records and interprets Franz Werfel's religious position, but gentle respect keeps him from investigating the causes of Werfel's “dilemma.” There is, indeed, something sacred and untouchable about every man, and it is rarely given us to penetrate the mystery of his inner life. Nor is it our task to judge him; happily, final judgment is reserved to the Lord alone. Though judgment is not ours, we are not released from making judgments, now and then. Hence I feel I should add a few observations to Mr. Ellert's diligent exposition.

First, I find Werfel's references to his Jewish birth as a special source for the understanding of Jesus painful. No doubt, Jesus is David's Son in every word He speaks, but before Him who offers no consolation, no victory, but that of the Cross, even a mild form of racism is absurd. Again, the notion of an Israel condemned to remain aloof from Christ till the end of days; the thought of a divinely decreed penance that now, and for all historic time, bars Jews from becoming Christians because of the Synagogue's failure to recognize Him, is as fanciful a construction as is the legend of the wandering Jew. To

89. See Werfel, *Star of the Unborn*, p. 579.

90. Werfel calls this “act of identification” man's “seeing God.” (Cf. *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 191.)

exclude Jews from the realm of Christ, as Werfel does, is a fatalism entirely unchristian.

One is almost compelled to see in this arbitrary banishment Werfel's attempt to "rationalize" his own indecision. But whence this indecision? There are those who say that, loving company, esteem, and other creaturely delights, he unwittingly feared the loneliness a full Christian existence might have imposed on him. There are others who compare him to one of his own creations, the poet in *The Song of Bernadette*, Hyacinthe de Lafite, who is unable to abandon speech about the mystery and move onward to its unconditional acceptance. They find Werfel not unlike one of the characters in Gertrude von le Fort's *Schweisstuch der Veronika*. "I denied myself to God," she confesses, "not with a clear and definite No, but with an indefinite Yes. I never fully surrendered to Him."

Werfel once wrote: "It is high time for the spiritually awake individual to acknowledge, 'I dare not shirk the ultimate question without remaining a craven weakling on earth, having no firm foundation.'" Commenting on this appeal, Cornelia and Irving Süssman remark:

It was not in the question which he pursued as a writer, but in the answer which pursued him as a man, that one penetrates the subtle pathos of that mysterious split-ness which polarizes a literary man, so that while his word may be true north, his existence may be south, or paralyzed between the two poles. (*The Critic*, Dec. 1959-Jan. 1960, p. 13.)

They also allude to these words of Jacques Maritain:

It is something to know that God is a transcendent and sovereign Self; but it is something else again to enter oneself and with all one's baggage—one's own existence and flesh and blood—into the vital relationship in which created subjectivity is brought face to face with this transcendent subjectivity and, trembling and loving, looks to it for salvation. This is the business of religion.

Religion is essentially that which no philosophy can be: a relation of person to person with all the risk, the mystery, the dread, the confidence, the delight, and the torment that lie in such a relationship. (*Existence and the Existent*, Image Books, Doubleday, p. 80.)

To sum up, for Werfel image and thought, poetry and theological speculation, seem to have had primacy over faith and commitment.

If this sounds like a bold or presumptuous statement, I can only plead that it is far less severe than Werfel's own examination of conscience. In "Stammering at the Eleventh Hour," a poem contained in a privately printed collection, *Gedichte aus den Jahren 1908-1945*, he drops all defense:

*I must beat my breast,
Be my own accuser!
Oh God, hear my stammer:
Into every trap I fell.
Not for so much as a single day
Could I free myself from evil. . . .*

*When my heart, a universe of bliss, undeserved,
Was drowned in the chant of "Holy, Holy,"
I was yours.
While I still dreamt I believed,
I had long been lying in the dust.
These lightning flashes are all I own.
They are the last guilders
My vices have not stolen.
Thus I can pay my debt to you
With nothing but my own debts.*

But where there is sorrow there is hope. Anyone who so vividly knows that his frailties and his faults cry for mercy, cannot be far from the kingdom.

PERSPECTIVES

Stanislas Lyonnet, S.J.

ST. PAUL: LIBERTY AND LAW

ST. PAUL'S assertion admits no compromise: The Christian vocation is a vocation to liberty. The Christian is a son, not a hireling, not a slave. "You have been called to liberty, brethren," he writes to the Galatians. And again: "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law" (5:13, 18). These proclamations, and others like them, were a source of scandal, not only to the Jews, but even to some of the first Christians. That St. Paul found himself the object of latent hostility, or at least of a painful lack of understanding, from the very beginning of his missionary activity at Antioch about the year 50 until, it would seem, his last days, was mainly, if not solely, due to his attitude toward the Law and to his preaching of Christian liberty.¹ It is this attitude that in our own day continues to alienate those Jews who are sincerely drawn to the person of Christ. True, when circumstances required it, he could make himself all things to all men, even a Jew to the Jews in order to win them (see 1 Cor 9:20)² but, as the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians indicates, he was unyielding whenever the principle of Christian liberty was at stake. For him it was no secondary doctrine, no side issue; the whole religion of Christ was in the balance.

But it is necessary to understand the precise nature of the liberty he preached. His controversy with the Judaizers, especially in the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, gave him ample opportunity to set forth his ideas as completely as he wished, but his reflections, worked

1. Among the many indications of this opposition to be found in St. Paul's letters, there is the moving plea of Phil 1:15-17, and the anxiety that beset the Apostle as he was about to hand over to the mother church in Jerusalem the collection he had so tirelessly gathered among the churches of the diaspora (see Rom 15:25-31).

2. There is no reason, therefore, to doubt the account of Timothy's circumcision (see Ac 16:3) nor that of St. Paul's compliance in Jerusalem with the wishes of St. James (see 21:24).

out as they were in very particular historical circumstances, might seem to deal with problems now out of date. Still, I am persuaded that, with a little attention, a doctrine can be extracted from St. Paul's arguments that has undeniable validity and importance for our own day. This doctrine might be summed up in these words: The Christian who is led by the Holy Spirit, and precisely to the extent that he is led by the Spirit, finds himself freed, in Christ, from the Law of Moses; he is freed from it not only as the Law of Moses, but as law. He is delivered from any law that constrains or coerces (I do not say *binds*) him from without; yet, this in no way makes him an amoral being, outside the realm of good and bad.

Perfectly coherent, this doctrine is, despite appearances, clear and simple as well. It is one that Catholic tradition repeats unceasingly, particularly in the wake of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, to mention only those two Doctors of the Church. If this doctrine of freedom always seems new to us, it is because in everyday life we are apt to forget it.

DELIVERANCE FROM LAW

WHEN he speaks of law, St. Paul obviously has in mind, above all, that Law which for him and for his Jewish contemporaries was uniquely worthy of the title, the legislation given on Mount Sinai. To measure the offense his statements must needs have given to his fellow Jews, we only have to recall the veneration, the honor, with which they surrounded the Torah. Having in their minds become identified with the divine wisdom, the Law itself could proclaim:

*"Before all ages, in the beginning, He created me,
and through all ages I shall not cease to be. . . .*

*Come to me, all you that yearn for me,
and be filled with my fruits. . . .*

*He who eats of me will hunger still,
he who drinks of me will thirst for more;
He who obeys me will not be put to shame,
he who serves me will never fail."*

*All this is true of the book of the Most High's covenant
the Law which Moses commanded us. . . .*

(Ecclus 24:9, 18, 20-22)

The Law was the word of God, the water that slakes all thirst, the life-giving bread, the vine laden with delectable fruit; in it were hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In short, the Law held the place St. John and St. Paul were rightly to announce as that of the Christ.³

But from this Law the Christian has been delivered, St. Paul unequivocally declares: "You are not under the Law but under grace" (Rom 6:14). A wife is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but, when he dies, is completely free from the law that bound her to him, so that she is not an adulteress if she marries another. In like manner the Christian, united to Christ dead and risen, is dead to the Law, delivered from it, no longer its subject (see Rom 7:1-6). But had the Law no role to play in the history of the chosen people? Indeed, but it was the thankless one of a jailer, or of a pedagogue, the slave whose task it was, not to teach the children, but to lead them to their teacher (see Gal 3:23-24). Beyond this, St. Paul paradoxically asserts that the Law, which the Jews revere as the source of life, has been imposed by God on man to bring him death. The economy of the Law was not that of a blessing but of a curse (see Gal 3:10).

"What then was the Law?" he asks in the Epistle to the Galatians (3:19), and his answer is that it was given to make room for transgression. This was a shocking statement, even for Christian readers, and well-meaning copyists very soon tried to soften its harshness.⁴ In spite of the context, many ancient commentators, both Greek and Latin, interpreted the Apostle as saying that the Law had been enacted to repress, reduce, or curb transgressions, but this is an impossible subterfuge.⁵ The text is concerned with provoking transgressions, not with repressing them.

Is this an extravagance? Is it a paradox? Not at all! It is true that the Epistle to the Romans offers a more carefully worked out argument

3. This theme is found throughout St. John's Gospel, also in Col 2:3. Father Joseph Bonsirven, S.J., aptly remarks that a Christian reading the writings of the rabbis gains the impression that the Law is to them what Christ is to him. (See "Judaïsme Palestinien au temps de Jésus Christ," *Dictionnaire de la bible, Supplément*, IV, 1185.)

4. The Chester Beatty Papyrus, oldest witness of the direct tradition, has a text from which the word "transgression" has disappeared: "Why then the law of works until the offspring should come . . . ?" Others interpret this sentence differently: "Why then the law of works? It was enacted until the offspring should come. . . ."

5. Among the ancient commentators are such outstanding ones as St. Chrysostom, Theodore, St. Jerome, and Pelagius.

(see Rom 5:20-21; 7:5-23). There the Apostle's thought acquires a richness and balance that the impassioned, polemic tones of his earlier Letter to the Galatians prevented him from reaching. His teaching, however, remains unchanged. What is more, the dialectic of Romans brings out St. Paul's idea with even greater precision. Emancipation from the Law is one of the essential links, indeed, the final one, of his argument: Freed from sin, from death, and from the flesh, the Christian cannot be saved unless he is also freed from the Law; only this final liberation will dispossess sin of its power, its dominion over man: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, since you are not under the Law, but under grace" (Rom 6:14). To be under the Law, then, is the same as to be under the domination of sin: Never before had St. Paul been so incisive.

A source of scandal for the Jews, such assertions in turn run the opposite risk of leaving the modern Christian reader quite indifferent. He has never felt any strong attachment for the Law of Moses; he finds it quite normal not to be obliged to observe its complicated ritual or its profusion of observances—as circumcision, the minute prescriptions for keeping the Sabbath, for preparing food, or for contacts with the pagan world—which, as far as he can see, have no real religious value. As a matter of fact, had St. Paul intended no more than the Christian's deliverance from these obligations, his statements would hardly raise problems. Nor would they offer any great interest for the man of today. But so understood, they would be a caricature of his true teaching. Granting that such an interpretation has been seriously defended,⁶ the context of the Epistle to the Romans, if not that to the Galatians, is so clearly opposed to it that no exegete dreams of proposing it.

Under the term "law," St. Paul certainly includes that part of the Mosaic legislation which concerns the moral life in its strict sense; in fact, the Epistle to the Romans speaks of no other aspect of the Law but the moral one. As for the seventh chapter, where the question is expressly treated, everyone must at least see with Father Huby

6. Occasionally, an interpretation of this kind is implied in formulas that are ambiguous; for example, that St. Paul rejects the Old Law *in its positive aspects*, but not the moral law as founded on man's nature. We shall see that, in a certain sense, this is quite correct; but the Law of Moses made no such distinction, and neither did St. Paul.

that, if St. Paul has the Law of Moses in mind, it is "not in its ritual and ceremonial positions" that he considers it, "but in its permanent moral content."⁷ In other words, he is concerned with the Law of Moses as a positive expression of the natural law. Besides, St. Paul is explicit: The "law of sin and of death"⁸—that is, the Law that provokes sin and leads to death—from which, he proclaims, we are free (see 8:2) is clearly designated by means of one of the precepts of the Decalogue: "I did not know sin save through the Law. For I had not known lust unless the Law had said: 'Thou shalt not lust'" (7:7).

Let us press this passage further. The English and Latin translations: "Thou shalt not lust," *Non concupiscas*, may suggest that the Apostle has a particular commandment in mind, the one that prohibits carnal desires. This would be a serious mistake. Not only is the context of Exodus 20:17 or of Deuteronomy 5:21, from which this prohibition is taken, utterly opposed to such an interpretation, but in the Septuagint, the Greek word *epithumein*, whether in its verbal or substantive form, hardly ever evokes the idea of carnal desire. What the commandment forbids, in the most general sense, is the craving for what belongs to another, whether it be his house, his wife, his slave, his ox or ass, or anything else that he owns.⁹ In much the same way, Ecclesiasticus sums up the whole Jewish Law in the one precept: "Avoid all evil" (17:12). For Ben Sirach, this precept seems to epitomize not only the legislation of Sinai but all the expressions of God's will that have been given to man since his creation, expressions that have their synthesis in a unique law and covenant.¹⁰

7. Joseph Huby, S.J., *Saint Paul, épître aux romains* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1957), p. 234. "No allusion is made either to circumcision or to the other rites of Judaism" (*ibid.*, p. 231).

8. See Rom 8:2: "The law of the Spirit [giving] life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and of death."

9. "You shall not covet, *epithumein* (Hebrew: *hmd*), your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him" (Ex 20:17). Again: "You shall not covet, *epithumein* (*hmd*), your neighbor's wife. You shall not desire, *epithumein* ('*wb*'), your neighbor's house or field, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything that belongs to him" (Deut 5:21). Likewise, the place named *Kibrot-hattaavah*, the Graves of Greed, *epithumia* ('*wb*'), recalls the episode of the quail and the divine punishment inflicted upon "the greedy, *epithumētēs* ('*wb*) people" (see Num 11:34; 33:17).

10. Some commentators distinguish between two sections in this passage of Ben Sirach. The first (see 17:1-8) treats of creation, while in the second (see 17:9-11)

It is not surprising, then, that St. Paul in turn should choose an all-embracing formula, one that could be applied to every divine command and, indeed, contains them all, even the prohibition imposed upon our first parents, the prototype of all others. In his desire to describe how man becomes conscious of sin, to describe, too, the essential role played by law in this process, he spontaneously thinks of the biblical description of the sin that became the pattern of all our sins; all succeeding generations of men unfailingly share in it and reproduce it again and again in their own lives.¹¹ Many have noticed that more than one detail in this seventh chapter of Romans is in some way reminiscent of the third chapter of Genesis.¹² In any case, keeping in mind the narrative of Genesis may help throw light on a passage that is at first sight enigmatic, and suddenly clarify it.

Adam and Eve are living in a state of familiarity with God, when the serpent comes upon the scene and succeeds in persuading them that they will be like gods if they taste of the tree of the knowledge

"the author apparently passes from man in general to the Hebrew people in particular." (These words are those of Joseph Bonsirven, S.J., in his edition of *La Sainte Bible du Chanoine Crampon*, Paris: Desclée, 1952.) To judge by his wording, Father Bonsirven does not seem to adopt this particular point of view. In any case, the transition is imperceptible. Verse 9, while certainly referring to the Law of Moses, probably alludes (as Dom Calmer noted long ago) to the two trees in the garden of Eden: "He has set before them *knowledge*, a law of *life* as their inheritance." On the other hand, verse 6, recalling the precept given to Adam, says: "Good and evil He shows them"—a phrasing that practically reproduces the words of Moses when summing up the Law of Sinai: "I have set before you life and death, the good and the evil" (Deut 30:15, 19, according to the Septuagint). Cf. Huby, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

11. See Rom 5:12, and this writer's notes in the *Bible de Jérusalem*. (A brief English résumé of Father Lyonnet's interpretation of this much-discussed verse can be found in "Original Sin and Romans 5:12-14," *Theology Digest*, V, 1, Winter 1957, pp. 54-57 [Translator].) In the seventh chapter of Romans, it is not St. Paul's aim to describe the sin of Adam for its own sake; he is not writing as a historian, but as a theologian. His source of information, however, is not psychological introspection, as many have supposed, but the Old Testament.

12. So Methodius of Olympia (see *De Resurrectione* II, 1-8), Theodore of Mopsuestia, Severian of Gabala, Theodoret, and Gennadius of Constantinople, among the early writers; Cajetan, in the sixteenth century, and Lietzmann, Lagrange, and many others, among the moderns. Even among those who reject this interpretation, a good number concede that St. Paul took the Genesis account as his model. In his recent commentary, F. J. Leenhardt, too, writes that the affinity between verses 7-12 and Genesis 3 shows that the Apostle built his scenery with Adam in the background. (See *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Romains*, Neuchâtel, 1957, p. 100.) See also Peter Bläser, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941), p. 115, n. 77, and A. Feuiller who speaks of "features obviously borrowed from the scene of Adam's and Eve's disobedience in paradise, a fault which in some way was the prototype of all that followed" (*Lumière et Vie*, XIV, 1954, 222). Cf. Huby, *op. cit.*, pp. 601-604.

of good and evil. Suddenly, the fruit, which has become the means of securing this divine privilege, seems to Eve's eyes an unknown delight. The Bible brings this out emphatically: "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for the knowledge it would give" (Gen 3:6).¹³ But hardly have they violated God's command, when they find themselves reduced to nakedness, stripped of everything that previously constituted their happiness; once, they were God's friends but now they hide from Him, fear Him, and flee from Him. They have been forever driven from the garden, that is, from intimacy with God, and the cherubim with the flaming sword henceforth forbid them and their descendants to enter. Unless God Himself mercifully intervenes, the way that leads to the tree of life—of that life which belongs to God alone, and to those who are united to Him—is forever shut. Now God's command was unquestionably good, spiritual, divine. It is not the command but the serpent who is responsible for all the world's ills. And yet, according to the biblical account, the command did play a role; the serpent used it to induce our first parents to disobedience. Though it was intended to preserve life in them, in reality it became a cause or, at least, an occasion of death.

Such, I think, is the precise point St. Paul is trying to make in the much discussed passage of his Epistle to the Romans. There is only one change in the cast of characters: Sin, personified, plays the part of the serpent.¹⁴

"What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? By no means! Yet I did not know sin save through the Law. For I had not known¹⁵ lust unless the Law had said: 'Thou shalt not lust!' But sin, having thus found an occasion, worked in me by means of the commandment all manner of lust, for without the Law, sin was dead" (Rom 7:7-8).

13. The Hebrew terms translated here by "pleasing" and "desirable" (*wh* and *hmd*) are the same one finds in the expression "graves of greed or craving" and in the prohibition of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not covet, not lust." (See above, note 9.)

14. Diodorus of Tarsus said as much when he wrote: "He seems to call the devil sin." (*Pauluskommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche*, ed. Karl Staab, Münster: Aschendorff, 1932, p. 87.) One might compare Rom 5:12: "Through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death" with Wis 2:24: "By the envy of the devil, death entered the world."

15. "Known" in the pregnant biblical sense of spiritual experience.

It was dead like a dormant snake, Father Huby comments almost in spite of himself, so strongly does the Genesis account impose itself upon his mind.¹⁶ Even more in accordance with St. Paul's text, sin was dead as is *nekros*, a powerless corpse. St. Paul continues: "Once upon a time I was living without law" (7:9). This was truer of Adam than of any other man, of Adam and Eve before the sin-serpent wormed itself into them, as it were, creating in them that partnership of guilt which consisted in their desire to be like gods, a desire embodied in their longing for a taste of the forbidden tree.

Making the necessary allowances, these words of St. Paul could be applied to any circumcised Jew or baptized Christian, and in a certain sense to every human being, in so far as he has not yet, by a first free act, ordered his being to its last end.¹⁷ "But," the Apostle continues, "when the commandment came, sin revived, *anezēsen*"; heretofore a lifeless body, *nekros*, it rose up, *ana*, a living thing, *ezēsen*, "and I died," that is, I lost that eminently divine privilege of life. "And the commandment that was unto life was discovered in my case to be unto death. For sin having taken occasion from the commandment, deceived me"—as the serpent deceived Eve¹⁸—"and through it killed me" (Rom 7:9-11). For St. Paul, then, just as for the authors of Genesis 3 and Wisdom 2:24, the one responsible for death is neither the Law nor its Author, but the serpent or the devil or sin. The conclusion is obvious: "The Law indeed is holy and the commandment holy and just and good" (7:12).

How are we then to explain God's strange conduct? If He desires nothing but life, why give man a law that, in fact, will lead him to death? Having asked this question, St. Paul immediately provides

16. In his commentary, Father Huby abandons Father Lagrange's explanation and adopts what is called the "historical interpretation." As a matter of fact, the interpretation I adopt is no less historical; one must, however, begin history, as does Scripture, with man's creation and not merely with his sin (see Huby, *op. cit.*, pp. 605-607). By his thesis, St. Paul apparently also wished to combat the Jewish concept that, according to the Palestinian Targum, attributes Adam's "justice" to the observation of the Law, identified there with the tree of life.

17. See *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 89, a. 6, c. (Quotations from the *Summa* are taken from the translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, New York: Benziger, 1947 [Translator].)

18. See Gen 3:13. Surely, St. Paul is alluding to this verse in 2 Cor 11:3 and 1 Tim 2:14, and in both cases he uses *exapatō*, the same composite verb used in Rom 7:11, rather than the simple *apatō* of the Septuagint.

the answer: "Did then that which is good become death to me? By no means! But sin, that it might be manifest as sin, worked death for me through that which is good, in order that sin by reason of the commandment might become immeasurably sinful" (7:13), in other words, that sin might exercise its full power as sin by means of the commandment.

The decisive word has been spoken. According to the Jews, the Law conferred life, but a law as such, even if it proposed the most sublime ideal, could not transform a creature of flesh into a spiritual being, alive with the very life of God. If this were possible, it would mean that man has no need of being saved, that he can actually save himself! Far from conferring life, far from destroying or even repressing and curbing the death-bearing power of sin in man, the purpose of the Law is, as it were, to permit sin to exercise all its virulence but, in so doing, to bring itself out into the open and unmask itself. The Law does not take sin away, rather does it reveal to man his sinful state.¹⁹ Thus in the garden, when the serpent induced the woman, who looked upon him as a sincere friend and counselor, to violate the divine command, he showed his true colors: The most dangerous of enemies, the supreme sinner—a liar and a murderer, St. John calls him (see 8:44)—one who had turned from God, he now turns others from Him who is life.

Let us note in the margin that, properly speaking, law does not provoke sin, but transgression. Undoubtedly, we are accustomed to identifying the two concepts and to defining sin as a violation of a divine law, in order to accentuate its religious aspect, upon which the Bible is so insistent. St. Paul, more than anyone else, considers sin an opposition to God, but usually takes care not to confuse it with simple transgression. In this, he is faithful to the teaching of Genesis which places the sin of Adam and Eve not so much in the act of disobedience to God's command, but beyond it, in their desire to be like God. Thus the serpent, without having transgressed any formal precept, nevertheless sinned the most grievously; of the three personalities portrayed, he is the most severely punished and the only one cursed.

St. Paul looks upon transgression as the expression, the exteriori-

19. "By the works of the law no human being shall be justified before Him, for through law comes the recognition of sin" (Rom 3:20).

zation, of a much more radical evil, *hamartia*: an evil power personified, which is often reduced to mere carnal concupiscence, but which in reality more nearly corresponds to that deeply rooted egoism by which man, since original sin, orders everything to himself instead of ordering himself to God and to others. St. Augustine calls it self-love, architect of the City of Evil, and St. Paul plainly, "hostility to God" (Rom 8:7).²⁰ It is this "sin" that must be destroyed in us, and left to itself law is incapable of the task. But by permitting "transgression," law enables sin to reveal its true identity and man, schooled by his painful experience, to have recourse to the one Saviour. This is the way St. Paul understands the role of law, a role indispensable, ultimately beneficent and salutary. But this role is not the privilege of a particular code, not even that of Moses; rather does it fall to any law that is truly law, to any norm that is imposed on man's conscience from without. Consequently, it is from the "rule of law" as such that St. Paul declares the Christian freed.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT

IS THE Christian, then, a man without law, a creature beyond the realm of good and evil? St. Paul clearly foresaw this objection and his answer was a flat denial of its validity: "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under the Law but under grace? By no means!" (Rom 6:15). Indeed, nothing could more openly contradict the teaching of all his epistles, and if it seemed logical to draw such a conclusion from the premises I have established, then I should certainly have erred in the course of establishing them. Now, this apparent conflict must be resolved. The eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, taking up again the line of thought that had been sketched out in the Letter to the Galatians, furnishes, I believe, all the elements of a solution. The most authoritative interpreters of

20. Following entirely different lines of investigation, Father Gilleman reaches the same conclusion: "In the case of sin, the transgression of law formally specifies the sin, but its malice derives from its infidelity to charity. . . . This transgression is only the moral and exterior aspect of an actual disorder in our power of loving." Similarly, "moral obedience to law is rather the exterior aspect, the necessary mediation of our authentic and profound life which is love, so that moral life can be defined only by reference to charity." (Gerard Gilleman, S.J., *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*, trans. William F. Ryan, S.J., and André Vachon, S.J., Westminster: Newman, 1959, p. 279.)

Catholic tradition, in the face of this difficulty, have been content to repeat St. Paul's statements without attempting to mitigate them. In a matter so delicate, I shall be allowed to refer to these authorities, particularly to St. Thomas, who, in his commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul, recorded the ultimate expression of his thought.²¹

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Epistle to the Romans have set forth the conditions necessary for the Christian to be saved: deliverance from sin, from death, from the flesh, and the final but no less indispensable deliverance, that from the Law. They demonstrate that each successive deliverance is acquired for the Christian in Christ, and in Him alone. Hence, chapter 8 can begin with a cry of triumph: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!" St. Paul states the reason precisely: "For the law of the Spirit, [giving] life in Christ Jesus, has delivered me from the law of sin and of death" (8:1-2). Thus man is delivered from that Law which, according to the incontestable testimony of the Bible, had been the instrument of sin and death, by something that St. Paul (surprisingly, to say the least) also calls a law: the law of the life-giving Spirit. What does this mean? Can Christ have been satisfied with substituting for the Law of Moses another code, more perfect or less complicated perhaps, but of the same nature, which would therefore keep the Christian under legal rule? This would contradict all that has gone before. Only a moment ago, St. Paul had opposed to the Law of Moses not another law, but grace: If sin no longer exercises its dominion over you, he explains, it is because "you are not under the Law but under grace" (Rom 6:14). Has he changed his mind? Not at all! His choice of expression has changed, but not his thinking.

Tradition, furthermore, has not failed to grasp his line of thought. St. Thomas, for example, sums it all up so clearly and succinctly that there is no room for ambiguity: "The law of the Spirit," he writes in his commentary on Romans 8, "is what we call the New Law"—an observation to be kept in mind if we are to understand properly those passages of the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa Contra*

21. This is particularly true of the commentary on Romans, which was the only one St. Thomas had time to finish. The rest, from 1 Cor 7:14 (or, more precisely, from 10:1) is a transcript of Brother Reginald, reflecting courses given between 1259 and 1265 at the papal court in Orvieto.

Gentiles in which the Angelic Doctor expounds the "New Law" as a theologian. He continues: "Now the law of the Spirit is identified either with the person of the Holy Spirit or with the activity of that same Spirit in us." Lest anyone misunderstand the meaning he intends to convey by these words, he adds a comparison with the Old Law, recalling that just previously "the Apostle said of it that it was spiritual."²² It is spiritual, St. Thomas explains, in the sense that it is "given by the Holy Spirit."

The "law of the Spirit," then, does not differ from the Law of Moses—and a fortiori from all nonrevealed law, even if looked upon as the expression of the divine will—merely because it proposes a loftier ideal and imposes greater demands. Nor does it differ because it offers salvation at a bargain, as if Christ had replaced the unbearable yoke of the Law of Sinai with an "easy morality," which would be a scandal, indeed. No, the law of the Spirit is radically different by its very nature. It is not just a code, not even one "given by the Holy Spirit," but a law "produced in us by the Holy Spirit"; not a simple norm of actions outside us, but something that no legal code as such can possibly be: a new, inner, source of spiritual energy.

If St. Paul applies the term "law" to this spiritual energy, rather than the term "grace" that he uses elsewhere (see Rom 6:14), he most probably does it because of Jeremiah's prophecy (also mentioned in this context by St. Thomas) announcing a new covenant, the "New Testament." For the prophet, too, speaks of law: "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel. . . . I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts" (31:33). Every time the Angelic Doctor refers to this "New Testament," he does so in the same terms: "It is God's way to act in the interior of the soul, and it was thus that the New Testament was given, since it consists in the inpouring of the Holy Spirit." Again: "It is the Holy Spirit Himself who is the New Testament, inasmuch as He works in us the love that is the fulness of the Law."²³ For the Church and for her liturgy, too, the promulgation of the New Law does not date from the Sermon on the Mount, but from the day of Pentecost when the "finger of the Father's right hand," *digitus paternae dexteræ*, wrote His law in the hearts of men; the code of the

22. In Rom 7:14 St. Paul qualified the Old Law as *pneumatikos*.

23. In *Hebr.*, cap. 8, lect. 2; In *2 Cor.*, cap. 3, lect. 2.

Old Law given on Sinai finds its counterpart, not in a new code, but in the giving of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ In the beautiful words of Cardinal Seripando, it is this Spirit that the Christian "receives to take the Law's place."²⁵

No need, therefore, to fear a breakdown of moral responsibility. The Christian who receives the Holy Spirit as an active force within him or, in words that mean the same, who receives this activity of the Spirit, becomes capable of "walking according to the Spirit," that is, walking in conformity with what the Old Law, "spiritual" though it was, demanded of him in vain. This is why St. Paul, after proclaiming man's deliverance by the law of the Spirit, thanks to the redemptive work of Christ, can attribute to that work the following aim: "in order that the justification of the Law"—that justification which the Law wished but could not obtain from the creatures of flesh that we were—"might be fulfilled in us" (Rom 8:4). Mark the nuance of fullness suggested by the verb "fulfill," as when a prophecy is fulfilled in its accomplishment, or a type in its antitype.²⁶ "Fulfill" here is in the passive, so conscious is St. Paul that this "fulfillment," while remaining a free act of man, is even more truly an act of God, an act of the Spirit who is at work in man.

From this fundamental doctrine everything else flows, notably the fact that Christian morality is of necessity founded on love, as St. Paul, following his Master, teaches: "The whole Law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal 5:14). "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law. . . . If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . . Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law" (Rom 13:8-10). The reason is that love is not first of all a norm of conduct, but a dynamic force. As St. Thomas notes, it is

24. See Joseph Lécuyer, "Pentecôte et loi nouvelle," *La vie spirituelle*, XXV (May 1953), 471-490; also Jean Daniélou, S.J., *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), pp. 330-332.

25. In Rom. 8:2: *Haec lex Spiritus vitae est Dei Spiritus, quem humana mens legis vice accipit*. As is well known, far from being unreliable as a theologian, Seripando was created a cardinal in order that he might preside over the sessions of the Council of Trent as a legate, replacing Cardinal Cervini who had become Pope Marcellus II. (See Hubert Jedin, *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent, Cardinal Seripando*, London: Herder 1947, pp. 562-577.)

26. See Albert Descamps, *Les justes et la justice dan les évangiles et le christianisme primitif* (Louvain: Université catholique, 1950), pp. 112-113.

precisely because the Law, as a law, was not love that it could not justify man: "Consequently it was necessary to give us a law of the Spirit, who by producing love within us, could give us life."²⁷

Under these conditions, it is easy to see that a Christian, that is, a man led by the Holy Spirit,²⁸ can at the same time be freed from every external law—"not be under the Law"—and yet lead a perfect moral and virtuous life. St. Paul makes this abundantly clear in the Epistle to the Galatians, shortly after he has reduced the whole Law to love: "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal 5:16). Nothing could be more obvious, he explains, since these are two antagonistic principles: If you follow one, you cannot but oppose the other. "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." In fact, what need would you have of law? A spiritual man knows perfectly well what is carnal and, if he is spiritual, he will fly from it as by instinct, fly from "immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, envies, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and suchlike" (5:19-21).

To be guilty of such misdeeds would clearly indicate that one is not led by the Spirit. "Concerning these things I warn you, as I have warned you, that they who do such things will not attain the kingdom of God" (5:21). But these misdeeds you will not commit once you are spiritual. The fruits you will produce then will be those of the Spirit. Perhaps it would be better to say "the fruit," since there is really only one with many facets: "Charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continency" (5:22), in brief, the whole procession of Christian virtues. For St. Paul they are nothing but so many expressions of charity:

Charity is patient, is kind; charity does not envy, is not pretentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking, is not provoked; thinks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth; bears with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Cor 13:4-7)

27. In 2 Cor., cap. 3, lect. 2. Likewise, St. Augustine's *Dilige et quod vis fac*, "Love and do what you will," seems to be, at first sight, a practical principle of conduct concerning fraternal love. (See J. Gallay, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1955, pp. 545-555.)

28. In Rom 8:14 St. Paul gives this definition of a son of God: "Whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Since he has no need, then, for a law to constrain him from without, the Christian, led by the Spirit, fulfills every law in the full liberty of the sons of God.

In the light of these explanations, it is surprising that Father Prat should find it "difficult to see [in St. Paul] a governing principle of moral teaching," or that he could have written this astonishing passage:

That is precisely the delicate—I was about to say the weak—point of Paul's moral teaching: After having completely done away with the Mosaic Law, he never says clearly with what he replaces it. . . . In seeing Paul intent on destroying the whole edifice of the ancient Law, without appearing to think of reconstructing it, we ask with anxiety where this work of demolition is going to stop, and on what foundation the obligation of the new dispensation is to rest.²⁹

THE CODE OF CHRISTIAN LAWS

MORE than one reader will share Father Prat's perplexity, and his dilemma is not imaginary. There is no question but that the Christian religion involves certain positive laws. St. Paul himself does not hesitate to promulgate some, and they are often of a very precise nature. The morality of the New Testament, including that of the Apostle, has nothing in common with a "morality without obligation or sanction."³⁰ Upon the catechumen who asks for baptism the Church, in this resembling the Synagogue, fully intends to impose a code of morality that, though less complicated and more sublime, is nonetheless a code of laws. Besides, when we speak of the New Law as opposed to the Old, is it not of this aspect that we ordinarily think before and above all others?

Ordinarily perhaps; and, undoubtedly, it is this aspect that was in Father Prat's mind. But it was not, I think, in St. Paul's. True, on two different occasions he does speak of the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 9:21),³¹ but what he opposes to the Old Law is grace or the

29. See Ferdinand Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, trans. John L. Stoddard (New York: Benziger, 1934), II, 312.

30. On this particular aspect, see the excellent remarks of Gaston Salet in "La loi dans nos coeurs," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, LXXIX (1957), 449-462, 561-578.

31. What St. Paul means by this "law of Christ" ought to be sufficiently clear from what has just been said.

law of the Spirit which, as we have seen, comes to the same thing. Nor is this the approach of St. Thomas, who was certainly familiar with the classic opposition between the Old Law and the New. When seeking to define the latter, he is careful not to designate it primarily as a code of laws: "That which is preponderant [in it] is the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given through faith in Christ. Consequently the New Law is chiefly the grace itself of the Holy Ghost, which is given to those who believe in Christ."³² It is an unwritten law, he adds, and hence able to justify man. But to the extent that it is a code of written laws, to the extent that it contains the teachings of faith and moral precepts that govern human attitudes and acts, the New Law does not justify any more than did the Old Law since its nature is not different: It remains a norm of conduct, not a principle of activity. Thus, commenting on the Apostle's saying, "the letter kills" (2 Cor 3:6), the Angelic Doctor, in the steps of St. Augustine,³³ does not for a moment hesitate to write: "The letter denotes any writing that is external to man, even that of the moral precepts such as are contained in the Gospel. Wherefore the letter, even of the Gospel, would kill, unless there were the inward presence of the healing grace of faith."³⁴

Even after the Protestant controversies the language remains unchanged. There is, for example, St. Robert Bellarmine whose comment on the Pauline opposition between the "law of works" and the "law of faith" (see Rom 3:27)³⁵ is no less faithful to St. Augustine's *De Spiritu et Littera*:

32. *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 106, a. 1, c.

33. See St. Augustine, *De Spiritu et Littera*, chaps. 14, 17, 19, *passim* (PL 44:215-222).

34. *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 106, a. 2, c. St. Thomas did not shrink from using the formula *sola fides*, so much abused later on. Commenting on 1 Tim 1:8: *Scimus quia bona est lex, si quis ea legitime utatur*, "We know that the Law is good, if a man uses it rightly," he explains that St. Paul has in mind the commandments of the Decalogue and intends to say that their legitimate use consists in not attributing to them what they do not contain. The Angelic Doctor writes: *Non est in eis spes justificationis, sed in sola fide*, "There is no hope of justification in them, but in faith alone," that is to say, *fides per caritatem operans*, "faith which works through charity" (Gal 5:6), of which he speaks so often. As a proof, he quotes precisely the famous verse of Rom 3:28: *Arbitramur enim justificari hominem per fidem sine operibus legis*, "We reckon that a man is justified by faith independently of the works of the Law" (see *In 1 Tim.*, lect. 3).

35. In Rom 3:27 St. Paul opposes the law that consists of performing works to the one that consists in believing. (See St. Augustine, *op. cit.*, chap. 13, PL 44:213-215.)

The law of faith is faith itself, which obtains the grace for action, whereas the law of works is satisfied with commanding the same.

The law of works is the letter which kills, and the law of faith is the Spirit who gives life.

From this it follows that not only the law of Moses, but even the law of Christ, to the extent that it commands something, is the law of works, whereas the law of faith is the spirit of faith, by which not only we who are Christians, but the patriarchs as well, and the prophets, and all just men, have obtained the free gift of God's grace, and, once justified by that grace, have kept the commandments of the law.³⁶

Why, then, does the religion of Christ still require a code of laws? Why should there be kept, alongside the chief, unwritten element that justifies, another, written element that does not justify? If this state of affairs was strange in the old economy, does it not become incomprehensible in the economy of grace? Not at all!

The Pauline principle most certainly remains: "The Law is not made for the just, but for the unjust" (1 Tim 1:9). If all Christians were just, there would be no need to restrain them by laws. Law, as a rule, does not enter upon the scene except to repress an existing disorder. For example, as long as Christians received Communion frequently, the Church never thought of obligating them under pain of mortal sin to do so at least once a year.³⁷ But when fervor declined, she promulgated the precept of Easter Communion, in order to remind her faithful that it is impossible to possess divine life without being nourished by the flesh of the Christ. Even though all are subject to this law, it is really not directed to the fervent Christian who continues to receive Communion during the paschal season not, as St. Thomas puts it, because of the Lord's command, but because of that inner need which prompts him to communicate every Sunday or even every day of the year.³⁸ This does not imply that he is no longer bound by the precept but that, as long as he experiences this inner need—which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit leading him—he will

36. St. Robert Bellarmine, *De justificatione impii*, Liber I, caput XIX, *Opera Omnia* (Naples, 1856-62), IV, 492.

37. To cite but one example, it is said that in the thirteenth century the pious King of France, St. Louis, attended several Masses every day and recited the Office, but he only received Communion three times a year.

38. To use St. Thomas's expression (see *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 108, a. 1, c.).

in fact fulfill³⁹ the precept superabundantly, without even adverting to the fact. On the other hand, as soon as that inner need no longer makes itself felt, the law is there to constrain him and to warn him that he is no longer being led by the Spirit.

In such a case this law will play the same role for the Christian that the Law of Moses did for the Jew.⁴⁰ As a pedagogue to lead him to the Christ, it will not only act as a sort of substitute for the light no longer supplied by the Holy Spirit, but will, above all, help him to recognize his condition as a sinner—a condition which is by definition that of one who is no longer led by the Holy Spirit. And since, as we have seen, such a recognition is in St. Paul's judgment the first requirement for man's cure, it becomes evident that the law was made for sinners.

But the law is not without utility even for the just. Although he is in the state of grace, that is, led by the Holy Spirit, the Christian, as long as he remains on earth, possesses the Spirit only imperfectly, as a sort of pledge (see Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22). As long as he lives in a mortal body, he is never so completely freed from sin and from the flesh that he cannot at any moment fall back under their domination. Now in this unstable situation, the external, the written law, objective norm of man's moral conduct, will help his conscience which is so easily clouded by his passions—for the flesh continues to struggle against the spirit (see Gal 5:17)—to distinguish unerringly the works of the flesh from the fruit of the Spirit, and not to confuse the inclinations of his own sin-wounded nature with the inner promptings of the Spirit. St. Paul does not consider it superfluous to remind his readers what it is that the Spirit suggests to the genuinely spiritual man, nor to add to his doctrinal discussions exhortations meant to govern their moral life. Until the Christian acquires full spiritualization in heaven, his liberty will remain imperfect, inchoative;⁴¹ alongside the chief element of spiritualization, grace,

39. The Greek verb *plēroun*, "fulfill," must be given here the meaning I mentioned earlier.

40. As Father Huby puts it, the Christian, though freed from the Law, can by his own will call this freedom into question. "He can again live 'according to the flesh' (Rom 8:13), let sin reign in him (see 6:12); in doing so he is no longer under grace, but under the law. Then the law becomes again what it was for him before his union with Christ" (*op. cit.*, p. 233).

41. See Jean Mouroux, *The Christian Experience*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954), pp. 138-139, 196-197.

alone able to justify, there will be a secondary element, no more able to justify than was the Old Law, but still indispensable for sinners, and by no means superfluous for the imperfectly just that we all are.⁴²

Still, it is necessary that this secondary element remain secondary, and that it not imperceptibly tend to assume the role of the principal element, which is what happened to the Jewish Law in St. Paul's time. To ward off this ever-threatening danger, it is well to recall a basic principle which is only a corollary of the doctrine I have been setting forth till now, and which St. Thomas has succeeded in stating with his usual clarity: The external law may only be the expression of the interior law.

In his treatise on law in the *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas asks if the New Law should command or prohibit external works, that is, if it should involve a code of positive laws. His reply begins by reaffirming the doctrine that the preponderant part of the New Law is the inner grace of the Holy Spirit. Works can be commanded only in virtue of a necessary relation to that inner grace. Either they will be works that put us in contact with the humanity of the Christ, from whom flows all grace, and are therefore necessary to produce in us the inner dynamism that is faith working through charity. Or they will be works that translate and give concrete expression to this inner dynamism. If works possess a necessary relationship to this inner energy, they are commanded or forbidden in the code of the New Law. If, on the other hand, they have no essential connection with the interior law, they are neither commanded nor forbidden in the New Law Christ and the apostles promulgated. They are left to the discretion of the legislator who can command or forbid them in every case in which concrete circumstances indicate that for a certain group of Christians, or for the whole Church, there exists a necessary connection with the interior law of love—in other words, whenever such works become in practice the necessary expression of that law.⁴³

42. With Kierkegaard, and against Scheler and Kant, Father Gillon rightly remarks that human love, too, experiences the need to bind itself. Only through a bond does love become stable and in part escapes contingency; for a Catholic, love escapes contingency altogether through the sacrament of marriage. The "institution," far from being hostile to love, saves it. (See *Angelicum*, 1957, p. 257, n. 2.)

43. See *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 108, a. 1. See also a. 2: *Rectus usus gratiae est per opera caritatis*, "The right use of grace is through the works of love."

One consequence of this link between love and law is that, for the Christian, any purely external violation of law, a violation that by definition is unrelated to the interior law, cannot be a genuine violation. The notion of "involuntary sin" which occupies so large a place in the Mosaic legislation—the sin-offerings of Leviticus were meant to expiate precisely offenses of that kind—carries no meaning for the Christian. Of course, a purely material sin can have tragic consequences, either because of the habits to which it gives rise or because of its social repercussions but it is not a fault, in the strict sense of the word, requiring forgiveness.

On the other hand, an observance devoid of love is also devoid of meaning. Anyone who attaches an independent value to mere observance will try to keep it up at any cost; he may even imagine that he is still obeying the law when he is in fact dodging or circumventing or "outwitting" it.⁴⁴ For the man who sees in the outward observance nothing but an expression of the inner law, such an attitude is unthinkable. Since the sole aim of external law is to safeguard the Christian's inner dynamism, it derives all its value from the latter, not the other way around. What is essential, then, is not the observance of this or that practice of penance but the spirit of penance, not this or that pious practice but the spirit of prayer, for the practice is required only for the purpose of preserving the spirit. Without neglecting the letter, the Christian is above all concerned with the spirit; he does not think that he can truly observe a law until he has fully grasped its significance, that is, until he has pondered the conditions under which a law will make concrete the inner prompting he does—or should—experience.⁴⁵

44. The Gospel furnishes a typical example of outwitting the Law with regard to the Corban, "Something set apart for God" (see Mk 7:9-13). It has been said that, at times, the knowledge of the Law became "the knowledge of the means a just man may take in order to achieve his objectives without committing any fault against the Law." (Jacques Dupont, *Gnosis. La connaissance religieuse dans le épîtres de saint Paul*, Louvain: Université catholique, 1949, p. 256.) Some Christians entertain an attitude toward the law of abstinence, for example, that is not far removed from the one Father Dupont describes.

45. See Gillemann, *op. cit.*, p. 279: "The Christian way of considering law as the exteriority of love and of the moral order shows that the substance of moral life is not obedience to law, but charity towards persons, the human superior, and God; obedience, however indispensable, is second to love. . . . This 'law of grace' (Rom 6:15) is no longer a heavy yoke imposed from the outside; it is required by charity as its necessary determination."

Another consequence of the relationship between love and law is that ordinarily the outward law will not provide the Christian with an ideal, the attainment of which could possibly satisfy him, but simply with a minimum below which the dynamism that constitutes him as a Christian will inevitably fail him. It is for this reason that the code of the New Law, while including a series of positive prescriptions and prohibitions, before all else offers the Christian a norm of a completely different nature: the imitation of the person of the Christ, particularly of His love, which in turn is a reflection of the love of the Father. This is an objective norm, for Christ is not the creation of man's imagination, but a historical personality whose life and deeds have been recorded for us in the Gospels.⁴⁶ In fact, St. Paul hardly knows another norm; following the example of Christ, who commanded His disciples to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect, St. Paul can only repeat to his faithful that they should contemplate Christ and imitate Him:

Be kind to one another, and merciful, generously forgiving one another, as also God in Christ has generously forgiven you. Be you, therefore, imitators of God, as very dear children and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and delivered Himself up for us.

(Eph 4:32-5:2)

And the whole morality of marriage is summed up in one command:

Just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be subject to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her.

(Eph 5:24-26)

The pious Jew, so zealous in his devotion to the Law, strove to know it better and better, so that he might observe its most minute details. The manual of the Qumran community provides that whenever there are found ten members, "let there be among them a man who studies the Law day and night, continually, for the improvement of all."⁴⁷ For a Christian, it is the person of the Christ who is the

46. See Salet, *loc. cit.*, p. 575; Gillon, *loc. cit.*, pp. 376-377.

47. 1QS vi 6-7. See Géza Vermès, *Discovery in the Judean Desert* (New York: Desclee, 1956), p. 143.

whole law, not only with regard to its principal element, the spirit of Christ imparted to him, but even with regard to its secondary element, which, in the magnificent words of Father de Foucauld, is finally brought back to the imitation of Christ: "Your rule? To follow me. Do what I would do. In everything, ask yourself what would our Lord have done. And do it. This is your only rule, but it is your absolute rule."⁴⁸

A final consequence: When a Christian acts in this way, he is free, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17). This is a theme dear to St. Augustine, but not less so to St. Thomas who writes:

A man who acts of his own accord, acts freely, but one who is impelled by another, is not free. He who avoids evil, not because it is evil, but because a precept of the Lord forbids it, is not free. On the other hand, he who avoids evil because it is evil, is free.⁴⁹ Now it is precisely this the Holy Spirit accomplishes, by inwardly equipping the soul with an inner dynamism. The result is that a man refrains from evil out of love, as though the divine law were commanding him, and thus he is free, not because he is not subject to the divine law, but because his inner dynamism makes him do what the divine law requires.⁵⁰

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, when referring to the same Pauline adage on freedom, St. Thomas does not modify his language.⁵¹ Silvester of Ferrara, too, comments:

The just are under the divine law, which binds them without constraining them, to the extent that they observe the precepts of the law in a fully free and voluntary manner, not constrained by fear of punishment or the order of a superior, as are the wicked, who would not observe what the

48. Charles de Foucauld, *Ecrits Spirituels*, p. 171. Cf. the practical commentary given by Father René Voillaume in "Message from Beni-Abbès" of February 23, 1950, in *Seeds of the Desert*, trans. Willard Hill (Chicago: Fides, 1955), pp. 102-103.

49. As we know, for St. Thomas sin is an offense against God only in so far as it is opposed to man's true welfare: *Non enim Deus a nobis offenditur nisi ex eo quod contra nostrum proprium bonum agimus.* (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 122.)

50. In 2 Cor., cap. 3, lect. 3. ("His inner dynamism makes him do" is Father Lyonnet's interesting rendering of St. Thomas's: *Ex bono habitu inclinatur* [Translator].) See also *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2: "Since the grace of the Holy Ghost is like an interior habit bestowed on us and inclining us to act aright, it makes us do freely those things that are becoming to grace, and shun what is opposed to it."

51. See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV, c. 22.

law requires were there no divine command and did they not fear being punished for their transgression.⁵²

'GOVERNED BY GOD'S HAND'

AT THE conclusion of this essay, I cannot fail to mention the words St. John of the Cross inscribed on the summit of the mount of perfection: "There is no road here, for there is no law for the righteous man."⁵³ Nor can we overlook the principle, so clearly formulated by St. Ignatius at the beginning of his *Constitutions*, that governs his entire legislative work: the primacy of "that inner law of love and charity which the Holy Spirit is wont to engrave within the heart." This is a law that has no substitute, and it should be all-sufficient. Throughout the *Constitutions*, as he gives directives for the admission of candidates, the formation of young Jesuits for the apostolate, the choice of apostles and of their assignments, he is always quick to note that in all such matters the true guide will be "the holy unction of the divine wisdom,"⁵⁴ "only the unction of the Holy Spirit and that discretion the Lord is wont to impart to those who rely upon His divine majesty,"⁵⁵ or "the sovereign providence and direction of the Holy Spirit."⁵⁶ And if he requires of his disciples more than human ability and endowments, if he requires, above all, intimacy with God, it is precisely so that they "may be governed by the divine hand."⁵⁷ "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal 5:16).

52. Franciscus de Sylvestris Ferrariensis, *Comment. in Libros Quattuor contra Gentiles S. Thomae de Aquino*, lib. IV, cap. 22, 4.

53. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Volume I of *The Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (Westminster: Newman, 1953), p. xxxii.

54. *Constitutiones*, Pars. I, cap. 2, n. 13.

55. *Ibid.*, Pars. IV, cap. 8, n. 8.

56. *Ibid.*, Pars. VII, cap. 2 F.

57. *Ibid.*, Pars. X, n. 2.

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IN COLLABORATION WITH EDWARD A. SYNAN

BAHYA IBN PAḲUDA, TUTOR OF HEARTS

"AT THE crossroads of Judaism, Christianity and Islam," as Jacques Maritain has put it, stands the attractive silhouette of the Jewish sage, Bahya ben Joseph Ibn Paḳuda.¹ This figure is but a silhouette, for the picture history provides of him hardly exceeds two dimensions: Bahya lived in eleventh-century Spain and was a *dayyan*, a rabbinical judge, perhaps at Saragossa or Cordova.² What cannot be doubted—his great work, *An Introduction to the Duties of Hearts*, abundantly proves it—is that he was a pious Jew, familiar with three theologies: Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan.³ To know any one of these in eleventh-century Spain meant to know Greek philosophy as well, and the obscurity that veils Bahya's immediate sources in no way blurs the evidence that his knowledge of both Jewish and non-Jewish wisdom was extensive.⁴ Is it necessary to add that for him, as for nearly every master of the Middle Ages, philosophy wore a profoundly Plotinian guise and that to modify certain of its theses was the inevitable response of his biblical faith?

Still, Bahya is far from devaluing rational knowledge for the sake of exalting faith:

After we have gained an acquaintance, by the traditional ways, with all the divine commandments, with their foundations and their consequences,

1. Bahya Ibn Paḳūda, *Introduction aux devoirs des cœurs*, trans. André Chouraqui (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, n.d.), p. x. Although M. Maritain attributes this formula to M. Chouraqui, it does not appear in his "Liminaires"; see, however, *ibid.*, p. xlix.

2. See *ibid.*, pp. xxi-xxiv.

3. See *ibid.*, pp. xlix-lxi.

4. See *ibid.*, pp. xxix-xlix; see also the works of Georges Vajda: *La théologie ascétique de Bahya Ibn Paḳuda* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1947), p. 7; *Introduction à la pensée juive du moyen âge* (Paris: Vrin, 1947), pp. 85-94; *L'amour de Dieu dans la théologie juive du moyen âge* (Paris: Vrin, 1957), pp. 92-98.

Torah makes it a duty to re-think and, in its spirit, to re-live questions of this sort. We ought to scan them with reason's help until the truth so shines forth that all error is excluded. The Bible ordains that we meditate on the unity of God; according to rabbinical method, as well as by induction, this command applies not only to the unity of God, but to every spiritual reality that reason can grasp.⁵

After the boon of existence, knowledge is God's best gift; the Bible assures us that the source of wisdom, knowledge, and intelligence is none other than the Lord.⁶ Only the necessities of education justify a priority of Jewish tradition over reason; Torah will not profit if faith remains in darkness where reason could bring light!⁷ Bahya cites a text of unknown provenance, current in his day, that makes the role of a philosopher parallel to that of the man of faith:

No one can adore the supreme Cause and the first Principle save a prophet, thanks to an act that is natural to him, or a philosopher, thanks to the knowledge he has acquired. All the rest—for they can conceive of composite being only—adore not Him, but something else.⁸

Reason has contrived many a science, and Bahya is at one with the Aristotelians in grouping these disciplines under physics, mathematics, and theology.⁹ No doubt it is possible for one ignorant of the sciences to be a believer, but only the Jew who masters them can fulfill his responsibility to those who do not share his beliefs:

It is impossible for people to recognize the superiority of our wisdom and understanding if we are incompetent to offer them a lucid exposition

5. The original of Bahya Ibn Paḳuda's *An Introduction to the Duties of Hearts* is in Arabic. There is an English rendering by Moses Hyamson from the Hebrew translation of Jehuda Ibn Tibbon; the best modern translation from the original Arabic, though not entirely unopposed (see Vajda, *L'amour de Dieu*, p. 92, n. 1; p. 96, n. 1), is Chouraqui's into French. We have relied greatly on it, and every reference to Bahya's work, hereafter abbreviated as *Duties*—the Roman numeral indicating a main section, a portal, the Arabic number one of the portal's subdivisions—is followed by a page number referring to the Chouraqui edition. The above quotation is from *Duties*, Preamble; pp. 25–26.

6. See *ibid.*; p. 9.

7. See *ibid.*; p. 26.

8. *Duties*, I, 3; p. 56.

9. See *Duties*, Preamble; pp. 9–10; also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 10, 7; 1064b, 1–3; although Bahya certainly knew some version of the *Metaphysics*, this division of speculative philosophy he adopts had reached the Latin West centuries before the *Metaphysics* was known there. (See Boethius, *In Porphyrium Dialogus* I, PL 64:11; *De Trinitate* 2, PL 64:1250.)

of these matters—one founded on rational demonstrations, on proofs, and on arguments that establish the truth of our Torah and the certitude of our faith.¹⁰

To neglect the philosophical examination of the fundamental truths of religion is thus as much a failure against the faith as against reason itself: No more blameworthy would it be to neglect healing drugs when one is ill.¹¹

TEN PORTALS TO WISDOM

THE framework Bahya has chosen for his exposition is the figure of ten portals through which a seeker of interior wisdom advances, but this image cannot be pressed too closely. Although there is progress from one portal to the next, their themes are such that not one of them is ever superseded. More than a list, almost a litany, the ten portals define a program. The unity of God, contemplation of creatures, submission to God, abandonment to Him—these first four express the thoroughly biblical primacy of the Creator; the next five, purity of action, humility, penitence, the examination of conscience, and asceticism are man's way to conquer himself and thus make possible the portal that is the tenth because it is the goal of all the rest: the pure love of God. In his fascination with systematic divisions and subdivisions,¹² Bahya is a scholastic before our scholasticism, indeed, as his excellent historian has remarked, he is "somewhat the victim of his own procedures."¹³

Among his divisions, the organization of the work into ten portals is the most conspicuous, but by no means the most important. Far

10. *Duties*, I, 3; p. 56.

11. See *ibid.*; p. 55.

12. Thus there are ten portals, ten commands to be deduced from the *Shema*' (see *Duties*, I, Introd.; p. 49), ten propositions to direct our study of the existence and unity of God (see *ibid.*), three principles on which the demonstration of God as Creator hangs (see *Duties*, I, 5; p. 59), three divine attributes of essence and two of action (see *Duties*, I, 10; p. 85), three modes of knowledge (see *ibid.*; p. 97), six points to direct our contemplation of creatures (see *Duties*, II, Introd.; p. 118), seven signs of divine wisdom in creatures (see *Duties*, II, 4; pp. 129-133), seven degrees of contemplation (see *ibid.*), four human corporeal powers (see *Duties*, II, 5; p. 141), ten classes of Torah experts (see *Duties*, III, 4; pp. 192-196). None but another scholastic would wish to prolong this list and he would not find it difficult to do.

13. Vajda, *La théologie ascétique*, p. 47.

more significant is the division of religious duties into those of the body and those of the heart. The first of these categories, received in the Islamic world,¹⁴ is that of external worship, the exterior word and gesture; the second is that of the soul's interior dispositions. No misgivings forbid this *dayyan* to rank the duties of the body below those of the heart, and this is the case even when the duties of the body at stake are the liturgical rites commanded by the Bible.¹⁵ In some instances, exterior duties are founded on reason, but many are such that they would carry no obligations, had Torah not imposed them. The dietary laws and the regulations that determine details of clothing are examples of these last.

All duties of the heart, on the contrary, are founded on reason. External acts approach perfection only to the point that they spring from sound inner dispositions. A mendacious obedience it would be that engaged us to words and external acts at odds with the heart!¹⁶ A right intention can render a single good act as precious as many works and, if the interior source be deeply corrupt, one transgression will weigh as heavily as a multitude. The whole Law, fulfilled without love, counts for less than the sincere desire to accomplish even one commandment.¹⁷

Bahya wrote his book to make up for what struck him as a strange omission in Jewish writing: No one, so his fruitless searching convinced him, had devoted a whole volume to interior knowledge.¹⁸ Despite hesitations, inspired by the fears and passions he calls the "enemy within," Bahya resolved to undertake the task. One obstacle he had to overcome was the fear that he might fail to express his thought in the pure Arabic that alone could make his work acceptable

14. See *ibid.*, p. 16; see also Chouraqui's "Liminaires," in his translation of *Duties*, p. xxxi.

15. See Vajda, *L'amour de Dieu*, p. 93.

16. See *Duties*, Preamble; p. 29.

17. See *ibid.*; pp. 29–30. This insistence on the importance of intention does not mean that the act is morally irrelevant (see *Duties*, X, 3; p. 589); Bahya gives a more balanced analysis of the part played by intention and external act in sin than will Peter Abelard a generation later (see *Ethica seu Scito Te Ipsum*, *passim*, but especially chaps. 2 and 5, PL 178:635, 647). One of Abelard's translators has reached the curious conclusion that this Cluniac monk, who died on his way to file an appeal at the Papal Curia, was a "Protestant" in the first half of the twelfth century; if this reasoning is right, then perhaps we should count Bahya as an unwitting "Catholic"; it is after all, classical reformation doctrine that Catholics are Judaizers in their concern with how men act.

18. See *Duties*, Preamble; p. 30.

to the men of that time.¹⁹ A mark of what a modern historian has termed the "Jewish-Arab symbiosis," the Hebrew edition of this Jewish treatise is a translation.²⁰

Conquering all his fears and demanding of himself that he live the directions he was about to set down, Bahya put his trust in God and chose for his method the rhetorical one, "usual in theology."²¹ Only where his material required it would he make use of strict demonstration; apart from such questions as the divine existence and unity, abstract and technical language has no place in such a project. Most of his proofs, he thinks, are rational enough, but he does not fail to supplement them with parables and with citations from prophets and rabbis. Nor will he renounce the use of wise sayings current in communities other than his own: Jewish teachers have ever held that Gentiles have their share of understanding and the word of wisdom loses nothing because an idolater pronounces it.²² But of all those who have gone before him, it is a Jewish authority who especially enjoys Bahya's confidence. "To read the works of our master, Saadia Ha-Gaon, of blessed memory, will help you no little," he exhorts his reader. "Those works enlighten the reason, sharpen the understanding and instruct the simple; they are a goad to the lazy."²³

Once his desire for union with God is kindled, the wayfarer needs, above all, the help of God, but he cannot dispense with the knowledge Bahya hopes to convey. Without revealing the secret of his own life of prayer, he nevertheless attests to the joy that is the fruit of the pure love of God, the love of which he thirsts to be the herald:

My desire was to produce a work both lasting and complete, to lay up a secret treasure, to enkindle a fire that might give men light and show them the way to follow. My hope was that my joy might be the joy of every man, the fulfillment of my plan guidance for each one . . . I have desired to aid in the salvation of souls, to sound among men a call to action, to drag from their torpor those who hang back, to give direction

19. See *ibid.*; pp. 31-32.

20. Like his older contemporary Solomon Ibn Gabirol, who had written his major philosophical work, *Fountain of Life*, in Arabic but his poetic meditations in Hebrew, so Bahya added metrical compositions in Hebrew to his Arabic *Duties of Hearts*. The term "Jewish-Arab symbiosis" was coined by Solomon D. Gotein, *Jews and Arabs* (New York: Schocken, 1955), p. 146.

21. See *Duties*, Preamble; p. 34.

22. See *ibid.*; p. 35.

23. See *ibid.*; p. 42; also *Duties*, I, 10; p. 90, n. 4 and *Duties*, III, 4; p. 198, n. 2.

to those who enlist, to spur on the slow and encourage the beginners, to point out the path to those who have gone astray. . . . The one true God I do invoke: may He come to my aid! To Him I confide myself, Him do I beg for light, beg that He show me the straight way that leads to knowledge and to all those works, interior and exterior, which, in His kindness, He accepts.²⁴

THE LORD IS, AND THE LORD IS ONE

NOTHING is more instructive than the terms in which Bahya speaks of Him who is blessed, the God of Israel. "Real Unity," "primordial Being," "eternal Source of good" are titles he gives to the God who has created a world of beings that are signs of His unity, witnesses to His wisdom and grandeur and goodness. This rabbinical judge, so much at home with philosophies of the One and of its emanations, is confident that the Bible is right, even on rational grounds, in refusing to separate Being from the One, and he is equally persuaded that only a doctrine of free creation does justice to the One who is Being and Lord.²⁵

God exists and He is one: Quite apart from philosophy, Bahya knows that no other truth is more fundamental. The first commandment, proclaimed long since from Mount Sinai (see Ex 20:2; Deut 6:4), has this for its burden; the least philosophical hearers—women, children, those, too, whose intelligence will ever remain unawakened—possess in these words the seed of authentic religion.²⁶ Still, the *Shema'*, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!" must resound in the heart as well as in the ear. For those with the capacity to penetrate its meaning, the *Shema'* is an invitation to theology. How could we worship what we do not know? How could the Lord command us to the lesser duties of the body and remain indifferent to our exercise of the reason that is man's chief glory?²⁷ We believers know that God exists and that He is our God; we know that He is unique: hence the command to love Him without reservation.²⁸ This love springs from the heart, but it must not remain in secret dedication:

24. *Duties*, Preamble; pp. 31, 33.

25. See *Duties*, I, Introd.; p. 45 also *Duties*, II, 1; p. 120.

26. See *Duties*, I, Introd.; p. 45 also *Duties*, Preamble; pp. 23, 24.

27. See *Duties*, II, 2; p. 121.

28. See *Duties*, I, Introd.; p. 46 also *Duties*, X, Introd.; pp. 579–580.

Cost what it may—wealth, perhaps even life itself—the love of the faithful Jew for God must be professed before the world.²⁹

For many, the confession of divine unity is no more than a formula, parroted without understanding. For others, although the heart may be engaged and traditional religious duties fulfilled, no clear grasp of the meaning of this unity is achieved or, perhaps, the distinction between the divine and the created remains vague and God is likened to material things.³⁰ Some few reach the goal; these cherish the divine unity in their hearts, proclaim it by their words and know how to distinguish His “real” unity from the “metaphorical” unity of creatures.³¹

It is here that Bahya permits himself some technical philosophical discussion in a work otherwise dominated by a pragmatic and ascetical concern. Three principles, he thinks, underlie any rational demonstration of God’s existence. One is that nothing is its own Creator. A second is that succeeding causes must be limited in number—to ascend their series is to arrive without fail at a first. Finally, every composite being is necessarily a created one.³² The truth of these principles must be established, but they are truly “principles,” starting points rather than conclusions and, for this reason, not susceptible of direct demonstration. Bahya’s technique is the Aristotelian one of indirect or “dialectical” demonstration;³³ we may be forgiven for restricting our account to a rapid glance at only one.

Of every being that comes into existence it is true to say either: This being was created by itself, or: This being was created by some other. If the first statement is true, then it must be that this being created itself either before or after it had come into existence. Both suppositions are impossible: To say that a being created itself before it had come to exist is to say that a nonexistent, a nothing, has nonetheless acted; to say it created itself after it had begun to exist is to make nonsense of the notion of creation. Since both avenues open to self-creation thus end in absurdity, the first alternative must be rejected and by that the second, that of creation, is established: Whatever

29. See *Duties*, X, 2; pp. 585, 586; also *Duties*, X, 4; p. 596.

30. See *Duties*, I, 1; p. 50; also *Duties*, I, 2; p. 53.

31. See *Duties*, I, 1; p. 51; also *Duties*, I, 2; p. 54; *Duties*, III, 3; p. 184.

32. See *Duties*, I, 5; p. 59.

33. See *Duties*, Preamble; p. 34, where Bahya cites a passage in which the Philosopher argues that not everything can be demonstrated in the same way and that there are concepts that cannot be directly demonstrated at all. (See *Posterior Analytics* I, 3, 72b 19–24.)

comes to be is the creature of some other being, nothing is its own creator.³⁴

Like the existence of God, the mystery of the divine unity is the object of Bahya's dialectic. The world in its very plurality proclaims to human understanding that it has a single cause: Above every "two" there is necessarily a "one," and here this one is the divine will.³⁵ Compacted of opposed principles, the cosmos could not subsist without a single, all-pervading wisdom, manifested in the most diverse ways, as evident in the ant as in the elephant.³⁶ Aristotle well knew that there is nothing more extraordinary in one part of creation than in another.³⁷ Besides the *a posteriori* evidence of the cosmos, there is an *a priori* ground for insisting upon the oneness of God. The notion of two "creators" is as little acceptable to reason as it is to faith: Here Euclid reinforces the precedence of pure unity over the imperfect unity of creatures.³⁸ Although one in itself, a creature remains, when all is said, one item in a plurality. Each such individual is one in itself only because with other singulars, it shares in a more perfect unity that is prior to all derivative unities. Thus understood, a plurality is a collection of what are at best "metaphorical" unities. The "real" unity they bespeak is the very ground of their possibility.³⁹

Philosophers will recognize this truth of theirs in the sayings of the Hebrew prophets. Isaiah, for one, recounts these words of Yahweh:

*Before me there was no God formed,
Neither shall any be after me.*

(43:10)

Anna, the mother of Samuel, is even more explicit:

*There is none holy as the Lord;
For there is none beside thee;
Neither is there any rock like our God.*

(1 Kg 2:2)

Aristotle and Solomon, the one a royal tutor and the other a king, naturally put this insight in political terms, but it is the same truth.

34. See *Duties*, I, 5; pp. 59-60.

35. See *Duties*, I, 7; pp. 68-69.

36. See *ibid.*; p. 70. Boethius, too, had argued for one ruler, see *Consolation of Philosophy*, 3, p. 12 (PL 63:778).

37. See *Duties*, I, 7; p. 71.

38. See *ibid.*; p. 74.

39. See *ibid.*; pp. 74-75; also *Duties*, I, 8; pp. 79-80.

"A crowd of chiefs is worth nothing," said the Philosopher, "let the chief be but one."⁴⁰

*For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof;
But by a man of understanding and knowledge
established order shall long continue.*

(Prov 28:2)

Three "attributes of essence" as distinguished from those "of action" must be asserted of God. They are existence, unity, and eternity.⁴¹ Each of these three, according to Bahya, implies the other two: What is truly one, must *be* and indeed must be always. The eternal is neither multiple nor nonexistent. And absolute existence is necessarily one and eternal. Bahya's systematic insistence on these correlations defeats any attempt to read into his text a Plotinian priority of the One over Being or a contrary preference for Being as a divine name at the expense of the One or the Eternal.⁴²

Although three, these attributes must be taken in such wise that no multiplicity throws its shadow on the unity of God.⁴³ The divine attributes of essence are negative ones: They tell us that God is *not* nothing, that He is *not* multiple, that He is *not* created. Patient of no otherness, the divine essence would be traduced by the crude affirmations conveyed by human propositions. No change, no accident, no generation, no destruction, no composition, no differentiation, no association, no similitude—thus can we lisp of the Lord, able to say only what He is *not*. No language known to Bahya has a term to express what these attributes really mean, and it is to this limitation of human speech, not to some multiplicity in the essence of God, that the multiplicity of attributes discussed by the theologians and philosophers bears witness.⁴⁴ Not only does Bahya think Aristotle said

40. *Metaphysics*, II, 10; 1076a, 4; the Philosopher is citing Homer, *Iliad*, II, 204, but Bahya credits Aristotle with the saying.

41. See *Duties*, I, 10; pp. 85–87.

42. Nothing so fully reveals the primary inspiration of a metaphysics as the way it speaks of God: It was not by caprice that Plotinus located the One before all beings, that St. Augustine read Exodus 3:14 as meaning Being in the fullest sense because it is eternal and unchanging Being, whereas St. Thomas Aquinas found in the same text support for his view that God is truly Being because He is the unqualified act of existence. For all his philosophical acumen, Bahya avoids a firm decision on what the Middle Ages called the "proper" name of God.

43. See *ibid.*; p. 86.

44. See *ibid.*; p. 88.

it, he thinks the Philosopher was right to have said that "in speaking of God, there is more truth in the negative attributes than in positive ones."⁴⁵ Historically more secure than what Aristotle should have said is what a talmudic master did say: "He who does not maintain a religious reserve before the glory of the Creator, would better not have been born."⁴⁶ It is as impious as it is futile for earth-bound man to gaze on God's essence. The pitiless sun in Bahya's vacant Spanish sky serves as an image of this peril:

Every one is witness to the existence of the sun, enjoys its brilliance and all its gifts, but the man who tries to stare at the sun in all its splendor, no shade to shield him from its blaze, has his sight burned out in the attempt. His eyes no longer see—for him the sun is extinguished.⁴⁷

Convinced as he is that God exists and that this can be demonstrated, Bahya is just as certain that the divine essence lies beyond all our knowing. Indeed, intellectual humility alone can give the theologian some footing in the presence of this mystery of mysteries:

The basis of our knowledge of God is to realize that we are totally ignorant of His essence. Are you comparing some image to Him? Attributing some likeness to Him? Sound the depths of His Being and all will be clear: You will then so far reject every comparison as to find Him only by the path of the intellect.⁴⁸

THE WORLD OF CREATURES

RENOUNCING every vain attempt to express the Ineffable, venturing only to exclude and to deny, the theologian taught by Scripture has another method: "We must try to know the Creator by the trace of His presence in His works, not by the essence of His glory. Infinitely close in His creatures, He is infinitely distant in His glory."⁴⁹

Bahya thinks that to speak of "attributes of action," founded on the works of God, is permitted only because our need to know something of God and to submit ourselves to Him is so pressing.⁵⁰ In

45. *Ibid.*

46. See *ibid.*; p. 101; also Hag. 11b; cf. *Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino, 1935-48), *Hagigah*, pp. 59-60.

47. *Duties*, I, 10; p. 104.

48. *Ibid.*; p. 100; see also citation of an anonymous "philosopher," *ibid.*; p. 106.

49. *Ibid.*; p. 99.

50. See *ibid.*; p. 89.

speaking of the hand of God, His breath, His sorrow or His watchfulness, sacred Scripture has given us a pattern for just such language, and the rabbis, he assures his readers, have known how to translate these anthropomorphisms. Had the Bible spoken of spiritual things in the way that befits them, not one word would we understand; Scripture's way is to adapt the form of revelation to the capacity of the hearer.⁵¹ For the simple faithful, the rich imagery of the Bible makes accessible at least a minimum grasp of the truth.⁵² The man of understanding runs no risk since he will penetrate the rind of corporeal terms to uncover the reality they express. As the Talmud says: "The Bible uses the language of men."⁵³ Thus Bahya invites us to turn to creatures for they are traces of the divine attributes of action.

This varied world of creatures bears witness in its very variety not only to the essential unity of God, but also to the sovereign freedom of the divine will. An agent that produces monotonously uniform results—the fire that never fails to burn, the water that always moistens—is an agent enslaved.⁵⁴ Not so the God of whom the psalmist sings:

*Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that hath He done,
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.*
(134[135]:6)

Bahya's remark here, that only the Most High knows all things, suggests that, for him, God's freedom in creating is a correlate of the divine omniscience.⁵⁵ Although man cannot truly know the essence of God, reason joins Scripture and tradition to impose on him the duty of knowing what he can of the divine wisdom as it is bodied forth in created things.⁵⁶ On the other hand, nothing is more foolish than to mistake this world for an eternal abode; the wise man builds his hopes on the world to come.⁵⁷ For Bahya, things are precious as signs, as rungs on a ladder that ascends to heaven: The seven degrees to be achieved in the contemplation of creatures are the seven biblical pillars of wisdom.⁵⁸

51. See *ibid.*; p. 93. From the time of Boethius this notion is a commonplace among Latin theologians. (See *op. cit.*, 5, p. 6, PL 63:858.)

52. See *Duties*, I, 10; p. 106.

53. See *ibid.*; p. 92; also B.M. 3b; cf. *B. Talmud, Baba Mezi'a*, p. 195.

54. See *Duties*, II, 1; pp. 119–120.

55. See *ibid.*; p. 120.

56. See *Duties*, II, 3; pp. 126–128; also Rom 1:20.

57. See *Duties*, II, 3; p. 126.

58. See *ibid.*; pp. 129–133; also Prov 11:1.

Best among all the created signs of this wisdom is man himself. Rightly called a microcosm,⁵⁹ he is at once the immediate cause for which the world has been made and a mysterious image of the macrocosm.⁶⁰ "Whoever is ignorant of the sciences, is ignorant of truth, of the traces left by the Creator's wisdom in His works. Not knowing his own body, how will he grasp what surrounds him?"⁶¹ More marvelous than man's body, the lightsome spiritual substance that is his soul makes him akin to the superior intellects.⁶² These two constituents of man are in mutual opposition. Thanks to one, man is driven to seek joys that he shares with beasts; thanks to the other, he tends to despise this world and even to fly from civilized society. In Bahya's judgment, neither of these tendencies should be allowed to overpower the other completely: To live like a beast is to destroy all order, to despise the world is to put the life of man in jeopardy, both here and hereafter. More than once he expresses the Platonic conviction that the body is the prison of the soul and that the soul is equipped with certain of its powers for the sake of the body.⁶³

As Job well knew, man lives out the story of God's gracious mercy, from his conception and birth to his last breath (see 39:1-4).⁶⁴ But no merely corporeal gift can equal the spiritual ones; thought, memory, forgetfulness, delicacy, reason, and the word, both spoken and written, count for more than any bodily wealth.⁶⁵ The Bible, for instance, is composed of written words, and this alone would show what value they have; in comparison with other traditions of Jewish piety, Bahya uses considerable freedom in his treatment of the Bible but, in his fashion, he too esteems the inspired words for their own sake.⁶⁶ What gift that comes to man through the laws of nature and his inheritance of reason can be put on the same plane as sacred Scripture? Still more awesome than the words of the Bible are those astounding biblical deeds, those miracles by which Moses overturned the very laws of nature! When he

59. An analogy to be found in Aristotle (*Physics* VIII, 2, 252b 17-27), the notion of man as microcosm pervades the Middle Ages. See, for instance, Godfrey of St. Victor in the West (Philippe Delhay, *Le Microcosmos de Godefroy de Saint-Victor*, Lille: Facultés catholiques, 1951). For Islamic sources see Vajda, *La théologie ascétique*, p. 25, n. 3.

60. See *Duties*, II, 5; p. 134.

61. *Duties*, Preamble; p. 41.

62. See *Duties*, II, 5; p. 136; also *Duties*, X, 1; p. 582.

63. See *Duties*, IX, 1; p. 539; also *Duties*, IX, 3; p. 547.

64. See *Duties*, II, 5; pp. 156-157.

65. See *ibid.*; pp. 141-145.

66. See Vajda, *L'amour de Dieu*, pp. 93-94.

reflects on more recent Jewish history, Bahya strikes a chord not often heard: Taken as a whole, he says, even in exile and surrounded by Gentiles, Israel's lot has been a favorable one. This is especially evident in time of war, when the Jewish lower and middle classes are often better off than their Gentile counterparts; the promise of Leviticus has, in fact, come true: "Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them . . ." (26:44).⁶⁷

ABANDONMENT

IN URGING total submission to the benign Creator of every gift, Bahya is close to his non-Jewish contemporaries, both Mohammedan and Christian, but he is confident that the Jew, above all, has reason to cast himself upon the Lord. Among Jews, those in the priestly line have received the best of all blessings, and it is on priest and Levite that gratitude makes the most profound demands.⁶⁸ Submission to God has two degrees, but neither one is to be despised; the submission of praise is surely better than that of fear, but the first is "better" precisely because the second is good.⁶⁹ This teacher of the heart's duties never tires of appealing to the divine omnipotence as the reason for abandonment.⁷⁰ What could be more futile than for man to measure himself with the omnipotent God? But this pious pragmatism does not blind him to the divine generosity; the tribute of love is not less sincere because the Torah commands a tribute of awe.⁷¹

The divine omnipotence is a field where many a theologian has come to grief: Quietism can masquerade as devout submission. A caricature of confidence in God, the quietism of misguided theologians, in strict logic, devalues even their own theologizing. To trust in human effort where the divine is at stake, on the contrary, is an impiety as blasphemous as it is vain. Confronted by the claims of God's power and man's freedom,⁷² Bahya is content to formulate a practical norm:

67. See *Duties*, II, 5; p. 153.

68. See *Duties*, III, 3; p. 185; also *Duties*, III, 8; p. 226, *Duties*, III, 6; pp. 212-213, 215.

69. See *Duties*, III, 3; p. 175; also *Duties*, X, Introd.; p. 581.

70. See *Duties*, IV, 4; pp. 278-279.

71. See *Duties*, IV, 1; p. 255.

72. See *Duties*, IV, 4; p. 295.

The thing to do is to act as if our actions depended on man alone . . . but we should also abandon ourselves to the Most High with faith and with the clear understanding that He governs all, that good and ill hang on His decrees alone, His unique will, His highest word.⁷³

Bahya knows there are areas where even theological reasoning is at a loss,⁷⁴ and we are safe in our confidence that God will surpass every claim of justice.⁷⁵ By no means blind to the role of punishments and rewards in God's governance of men, he has plain words to describe those who think our actions unimportant: Like Zimri demanding the wages of Pinhas,⁷⁶ only the fool and the simpleton presume to do nothing and still hope for the reward reserved to faithful workers.⁷⁷

All wanton tempting of God must be excluded from authentic abandonment. The ways of nature are ordained by God and so deserve our respect.⁷⁸ Miracles there may be, when and where it pleases Him, but all ways are in His power. In sickness, to choose a commonplace instance, we ought to use natural remedies and at the same time abandon ourselves to God who gives them their healing powers.⁷⁹ It is one thing to use intermediate causes, such as medicines, with gratitude and piety, but quite another to rely upon them to the exclusion of the divine will. Apart from that will, they would be nothing.⁸⁰ The story of Samuel and Saul shows that prudence is not rendered superfluous by abandonment, and no distortion of abandonment is worse than that of the suicide, unwilling to confide himself to the divine care.⁸¹

Bahya is not the last moralist to observe that his own times are the worst of all, and he has his own views why this should be so. In the golden age of the patriarchs, he says, life was simple and, in consequence, passions were feeble and faith was strong. A few commandments sufficed, and the Law in its pre-Mosaic simplicity set an adequate standard of asceticism. But those happy times were followed by the sojourn of God's people in Egypt, infamous for its fleshpots; there, a more onerous asceticism was required to repress their upsurging pas-

73. *Duties*, III, 8; pp. 226–227.

74. See *Duties*, IV, 3; p. 270.

75. See *Duties*, IV, Introd. and 1; pp. 253–255.

76. See Num 25:6–14; also Sanh. 82a–b; cf. *B. Talmud, Sanhedrin*, pp. 545–548.

77. See *Duties*, IV, 4; p. 308; also *Duties*, IX, 2; pp. 542–543.

78. See *Duties*, IV, 4; p. 279; also *Duties*, IV, 5; p. 311.

79. See *Duties*, IV, 4; pp. 283–284.

80. See *Duties*, IV, 3; p. 268.

81. See *Duties*, IV, 4; p. 280.

sions. Worse yet was Israel's plight after the conquest and settlement of Canaan: Not for nothing had Scripture styled the land of promise a land flowing with milk and honey! The more prosperity grew, the more passion extended its empire over reason; only the asceticism of the Nazarites and of the prophetic guilds could raise effective dikes to contain flooding sense.⁸² This progressive decline in morals, with its corresponding need for abnegation in the use of what is licit, has continued through the ages.

The ancients were safe in cultivating at once the goods of this world and those of the world to come; for us this ambivalence is full of peril. Judaism is best defended by asceticism, "a renouncement of the repose and of the carnal pleasures not strictly necessary for life."⁸³ Bahya thinks he has the weight of Torah on his side when he argues the claim of the ascetic and, as always, here reason can be invoked to defend what Torah prescribes:

Believers ought to submit themselves to asceticism because the intention of Torah is to make reason victorious over the passions of the soul. The principle of all sin, the cause of all vice, is surely a primacy over reason accorded to passion. No people ever falls to the standard of this world without first turning from its primordial tradition, without first losing innocence to passion, without putting itself far from the path of its fathers. This path is one of moderation in this world and of satisfying only what is strictly necessary for living there.⁸⁴

I cannot help thinking that Bahya would be as bewildered as repelled by complacent announcements, so common in our day, that self-denial is pointless because man is good.

This asceticism must be evaluated rationally. Not to speak of the hypocrite, who is externally severe for the sake of his reputation, or of the pauper who tries to make a virtue of the poverty he inwardly resents, those who fly the cities to live in the desert and those, too, who may stay in the city but keep to themselves, are open to criticism. The ascetics Torah praises are more moderate:⁸⁵

They banish the world from their hearts, but they do their work, they sow, they take part in the worship the community offers God, but they

82. See *Duties*, IX, 7; pp. 571-572.

83. *Duties*, IX, 2; p. 540.

84. *Ibid.*; pp. 540-541.

85. See *Duties*, IX, *passim*, but especially 1, 2, 3, 5, 6; Bahya is persuaded that authentic Judaism necessarily demands asceticism.

know that man, whose origin is in the spiritual world, is exiled in this earthly prison, that he is here to be tested. Thirsting for the hereafter, they make light of this world and its riches; on their guard, they await death, and their provisions for the journey are ready for the moment of departure.⁸⁶

Still, the Scriptures have rightly honored that elite, the prophets and the saints, who, by their desert wrestlings to free themselves from the bonds of sense, have merited the title "physicians of the faith."⁸⁷ The man without possessions, without wife or child, is free to fly to God and, if Bahya is impressed by the obviously Islamic tale of a semi-monastic city,⁸⁸ he has not forgotten the ascetic tradition of the Hebrew prophets: Elisha and Elijah, he knows, were no strangers to desert and silence.

The straight way of abandonment to God is to cleave to what makes a man attain the height of the saints, to conform to the virtues of the ascetics who scorned this world, to cast off all the self-love, all the self-will of one's heart by transforming them into love and yearning for the Blessed Lord. It is to hand oneself over to Him, to rejoice in His bosom and, like prophet and saint, to retire from this world, far from men, with heart full of confidence that God will put in play His grace, as He did for them in the hereafter.⁸⁹

What, in the end, is a martyr, but a man who will sacrifice all the world in abandoning himself to the will of God? So, too, did Abraham show himself ready to submit to the dreadful command that he slay Isaac.⁹⁰ Though not everyone can or should imitate these giants of abnegation, we all profit, in some fashion, from their example, and it is for their sake that God is willing to pardon the whole community. Not even celibacy in the interest of abandonment seems excessive to this devotee of Bible and Talmud:

Man has at once the care of his wife, of his children, of all under his roof, of his neighbors, his friends, his enemies, of relations and of acquaintances, of inferiors and superiors. . . . Each man confronts this choice: to be a solitary stranger or to be enmeshed in a family, surrounded by those near

86. *Duties*, IX, 3; p. 547.

87. See *Duties*, IX, 2; p. 544.

88. See *Duties*, IV, 4; pp. 291-292.

89. *Ibid.*; pp. 307-308.

90. See *ibid.*; p. 308; also Gen 22:1.

him. Such a stranger must find God his consolation in his solitude. . . . At death, no relative, no child, no companion will be of any help!⁹¹

Bahya accepts at its face value the Bible's realistic estimate of man and his morals. Beguiled by the thought of evil from his youth,⁹² man has the understanding of a fool and although he is just until he sins (Bahya obviously does not acknowledge the doctrine of original sin), at birth man resembles nothing so much as the young of the wild ass.⁹³ His composite nature is a fount of disorder that only Torah and a rule of conduct can restrain; few there are, even among the just, who have no former transgressions to bewail.⁹⁴ This means that penitence, the return of the rebel to the way of submission, and the repair of his ravages against divine worship, deserve the first place that the rabbis give them in the ritual.⁹⁵ Ignorance and passion, blindness and error play their mischievous role in sin, but the essential is a rebellious intention and penitence is always an effort to reverse this.⁹⁶ Four moments characterize true repentance: first, to be contrite, second to abandon sin, third to confess and to seek pardon; last, to engage soul and conscience against every future relapse.⁹⁷

Although it is hard to do penance for some faults and harder still to understand how irreparable crimes—murder, for one—can be expiated, Bahya has full confidence that God will always grant pardon where the sinner's heart is not fixed in perversity.⁹⁸ Fear and tears, the thought of judgment, gratitude for divine benefits,⁹⁹ and some one of the many good methods of examining the conscience (Bahya explains no fewer than thirty of these),¹⁰⁰ will help a sinner conquer his faults.

THE PURE LOVE OF GOD

PASSAGE through nine portals prepares the victory, and the tenth sings the pure love of God. For it is the love of God alone that justifies

91. *Duties*, IV, 4; pp. 290–291.

92. See *Duties*, VII, Intro.; p. 415; also Gen 8:21; 6:5.

93. See *Duties*, VII, Intro.; p. 416.

94. See *ibid.*; p. 417.

95. See *ibid.*

96. See the definition of penitence in the first lines of *Duties*, VII, 1; p. 418.

97. See *Duties*, VII, 4; p. 425.

98. See *Duties*, VII, 9; pp. 442–445.

99. See *Duties*, VII, 5; p. 428; also *Duties*, VII, 3; pp. 422–423.

100. See *Duties*, VIII, 3; pp. 461–525.

abandonment and asceticism, the Law and resistance to persecution or temptation:

Asceticism has for its purpose the integration of the heart, to direct it toward the love of God and to make it yearn for the divine delights; this is why we shall explain now the ways of the love of the Lord, blessed be He! Love is the highest state, the supreme level that men of God reach.¹⁰¹

The Law is notoriously complex: 613 commandments, 365 of them negative and 248 positive, some for stated times and places, some for individuals and some for the community, some for men and some for women. To the master of the interior life who has arrived at the summit of unmixed love, they seem all too few.¹⁰² In the dazzling light that reveals his obligation to the Most High, he searches sage and prophet for occasions to answer with passionate obedience the cascade of divine blessings.¹⁰³ Adepts are not hard to identify. Marked by qualities beyond our telling,¹⁰⁴ they throw themselves into the way eternally predestined by the Lord and despise the allurements of this world: "In the plenitude of their prostrations, of their veneration, of their love, they have emptied their souls, purified their hearts, of all that is not submission to God and penetration of Torah."¹⁰⁵

At one with the worshipping angels, men who have reached the goal find that the light of submission has done away with passion's fire. They live out their lives in patience and wisdom and modesty, in knowledge and fear and love. Passion and contrition alike disappear in the abyss of pure love; such a heart, could we see it unveiled, has burst open in the divine Presence. For it, created joys have lost their savor.¹⁰⁶ Even in this all but ecstatic portal, Bahya's realism will not let him forget on what foundations man must build:

The most powerful motive to help a man in this supreme stage is a great fear of God, a terror, but one that is sacred, in the presence of Him and of His commands. Always must we realize that He sees the secret of our souls, the nakedness of our lives, what we hide and what we reveal; that

101. *Duties*, X, Introd.; p. 579.

102. See *Duties*, X, 7; pp. 611–612.

103. See *ibid.*; p. 613.

104. See *ibid.*; pp. 608–609.

105. *Ibid.*; p. 609.

106. See *ibid.*; p. 610.

He leads us and loves us; that He knows our thoughts, our actions, past and yet to come; that He shows His trust in us when He approaches us. . . . God will never be absent from our thoughts, never outside our range of vision: In solitude, He will be near; in the deserts, He will abide in us. The crowded places of this world will seem solitudes to us and no solitude will seem empty.¹⁰⁷

In the hallowed dialogue of prayer, the master of interior knowledge, dead to this world, finds his life in God.¹⁰⁸ Excellent at all times, prayer in the night hours has a special value. The darkened world is less burdensome, then is appetite at peace, business suspended, the life of sense sinks into abeyance. Secure against the pitfalls of vainglory, for no observer then tempts him to hypocrisy, the victor in these battles encounters God in his solitary meditations.¹⁰⁹

[Such a soul] distinguishes truth from error, discerns the true face of her Creator and Maker, and when she grasps His power, His grandeur, she sinks to her knees and prostrates herself, fearful, trembling, abashed before the Most High. Nor does she abandon this posture until God calms her and stills her fear and dread. Then it is she drinks from the chalice of holy love; alone with God in a union of the heart, she makes Him the offering of her love. To Him she abandons herself, Him she desires. She has no other care than that of submitting to Him.¹¹⁰

Slaves of God that we are, we have a slave's three ways of loving his master. The master who is generous to a slave is the object of his love and hope; no master is so good as God, no slave so dependent as our soul. A second way that a slave might cherish a master is in gratitude for his readiness to forgive faults, and it goes without saying that God stands ready to cover, to blot out, to pardon numberless revolts and transgressions. No doubt these first two ways of loving God have a servile air that fully justifies the analogy Bahya has chosen. Not every slave, however, is content with a love that bears so clearly the stamp of self-interest: Even a slave might love his master for the master's own sake and thus it is possible for us to love God for His glory, for His grandeur, for His towering eminence.¹¹¹ Need we say that this is the

107. *Duties*, X, 3; pp. 591-592.

108. See *Duties*, X, 7; pp. 608-615.

109. See *Duties*, X, 6; p. 603.

110. *Duties*, X, 1; p. 583.

111. See *Duties*, X, 2; p. 585.

love that Bahya calls the "pure" love of God, love unmixed, love that transcends all egoism? This love alone Moses the prophet intended when he exhorted us to love God with all our strength:

"With all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength" (Deut 6:5)—this is to adhere in secret to the love of the Lord, yet to manifest it outwardly so that the total sincerity of that love might blaze forth, might be like a joyous song for the lovers of the Lord. It ought to blossom in the interior life as well as in that which unfolds before the eyes of all, in thought, but in action, too, balanced and solidly established according to a constant weight, a constant measure. Thus the psalmist sings: "My heart and my flesh sing for joy unto the living God" (83[84]: 3).¹¹²

Such was the storied bond that held the souls of David and of Jonathan in thrall.

The long preparation to enter the tenth portal—nine portals dedicated to a knowledge that owes so much to the Greeks and to an asceticism shared with other faiths—must not displace the center of gravity that Bahya has located only in love. Indeed, he had no choice: Man loves only what he knows, man's forces need training and direction. To this Bahya adds an unquestioning faith that God will not be outdone in generosity and that merely human effort can never suffice to bring a man to the goal of divine union:

He who perseveres in the love which is a path of hope and fear, a love, the exigency of which is within the power of most men to meet if they rally their strength and will; such a one will receive the strengthening and the help of the Lord—beyond human possibilities—to arrive at the absolute love that exalts the glory of the Most High, according to the saying of the sage:

*I love them that love me,
And those that seek me earnestly shall find me.*
(Prov 8:17)¹¹³

When the principles are established and we are firmly grounded in an asceticism that excludes the pleasures and desires of this world, then we grasp the grandeur, the majesty of God and His exalted splendor. When each one perceives the trifling worth of his own person, sees

112. *Ibid.*; pp. 587–588.

113. *Duties*, X, 4; p. 596; see also *Duties*, X, 7; p. 609.

God's immense goodness and all the magnitude of His grace, then divine love, in all its fullness, springs up in the truth and purity of a soul that desires the Lord and strains all its strength to be at one with Him.¹¹⁴ "The love of God is the soaring of a soul which, essentially, is freeing herself to fly towards God in order to unite herself to His supreme light."¹¹⁵

BALANCING THE BOOK

DESPITE its "scholastic" panoply, *An Introduction to the Duties of Hearts* is first and last a guide for daily living; hence an insistence upon categories too clear-cut would betray Bahya's thought. Nothing would be easier than to collect texts in which he assigns to private prayer a value deeper than that of the Jewish liturgy, but this in no way authorizes us to conclude that he defends the cultivation of a dogmatically neutral "art of prayer." His confidence in reason as the defense of faith and the best of God's gifts, as the power that sets man above beast, makes him a faithful disciple of Saadia ben Joseph, but he is no more a "rationalist" in the mode of the Enlightenment than were the Christian masters of the twelfth and thirteenth century.

Bahya's remarks on asceticism, too, when taken to the letter, suffer a certain ambiguity; perhaps it is not possible to reduce everything he has said on this subject to a mechanical consistency. But does this mean any more than that he is reluctant to give unqualified approval to rigors that would require us to leave the world of men in which God has placed us and yet is unable to withhold his admiration from those heroes of abnegation who are the pride of Israel? He is neither the first nor the most famous Jewish teacher to make a place for the less dismaying virtues in a world where total renunciation remains the ideal. St. Paul is still Saul of Tarsus and a Hebrew of the Hebrews when he protests that he would not have his disciples go out of this world (see 1 Cor 5:10), that the father who marries off a daughter does well, even though he who offers a child untouched to the Lord does better (see 1 Cor 7:38), and that the fathers of old, clad in skins and driven from cave to desert by the wicked, are the glory of his people (see Heb 11:32-40). Harmony is not a single note, sung in

114. See *Duties*, X, 3; p. 590.

115. *Duties*, X, 1; p. 582.

unison, but a more subtle unity, pervading and reconciling distinct currents of sound; the God who has known how to make a cosmos from elements disposed to chaos has known how to mirror the divine holiness in virtues as varied as His uncounted children. Ascetics will not be missing from their number but moderation will rule them all. Ineffably one, the divine sanctity was yet three times hailed by the Seraphim of His presence: Not all the myriad worshippings of His children can express the full divine fecundity.

Although he does not scruple to hail Jesus as a "saint,"¹¹⁶ Bahya counts Christianity a heresy; more than once he has named dualism in the same breath as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, as if the second, like the first, could not stand with the divine unity.¹¹⁷ When he speaks of the structure of man, Bahya is not one of those who eschew even the vocabulary of Platonic dualism, but his profoundly biblical inspiration makes it clear that, despite the terms he uses, his man is the man of Genesis, one single being, truly of this world, but as truly destined for another. The body is not to be despised: It is a marvel of God's love and power.

Was Bahya himself a mystic who attained the higher reaches of the prayer of union? The Spirit breathes where He will, and those to whom we owe our knowledge of this master think the question cannot be answered. No doubt they are right, and this means that, if we cannot assert with confidence that Bahya enjoyed the blessing he so esteemed, his silence, on the other hand, is no reason to deny it. His silence may well be but an instance of the delicacy he counts among the virtues. Prayer, to be sure, can flower in profound self-disclosure; St. John of the Cross and the two canonized Theresas, to name but three from among so many, are there to prove it. For other masters of prayer, reticence is a necessity. Despite his vocation to teach, Bahya is in good company if his notion of the teacher's role has led him to tell us all he could about God, but as little as possible about Bahya ben Joseph Ibn Paḳuda.

116. See *Duties*, VI, 6; p. 392; also *Duties*, VIII, 3; p. 495.

117. See *Duties*, I, 7; p. 78, n. 1; also *Duties*, V, 5; p. 107.

Franz Wasner

THE POPES' VENERATION OF THE TORAH

*Nondum lucta Lya caret,
levum Jacob femur aret.
O, si Christus hoc sanaret
nullo modo claudicaret.*

*Hic est celorum titulus
atque terrarum oculus,
fit angularis calculus
ut Judeorum populus
se gentili copularet.*

*Lia still waits strife's cessation,
Left thigh withered, Jacob's ration.
But, should Christ grant medication,
Limping knew annihilation!*

*He is the sign, celestial,
Vision of truth, terrestrial,
Stone at the corner, structural.
There that the tribes of Israel
Might make one with Gentile nations!
(11th century) ¹*

A CHAIN of historical events binds Israel, as a people, to those sacred happenings that the Church hails as the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Redemption of the world. Natural reasoning finds no explanation for the bewildering antinomy: On the basis of the Law Jewish officialdom clamored for Jesus' death—"We have a Law, and according to that Law He must die, because He has made Himself Son of God" (Jn 19:7), they declared—yet in that same Law the Church sees Him foretold and prefigured. And it is by clinging to this Law that the Synagogue crosses the centuries, rejecting the claim of Him whom the Church, during the same centuries, cherishing the same Law, adores as her Lord and God. Monsignor Charles Journet, at the outset of his illuminating essay on "The Mysterious Destinies of Israel," calls this link "so intimate . . . that not only Israel's spiritual destinies . . . but even its temporal destinies, with their share of the banal and commonplace, will be forever dependent on the most staggering supernatural mystery it is given us to know."²

1. "Analecta Hymnica 20," *Lieder und Motetten*, ed. G. M. Drevés (Leipzig, 1895), p. 108, no. 129; Gustavus Milchsack, *Hymni et Sequentiae* (Halle, 1886), p. 187, no. 179. Translation by the Reverend Edward A. Synan.

2. *The Bridge*, II, 36.

I

NOWHERE and at no time are these mysterious destinies more manifest than in those moments of contact between the Synagogue and the Church, between the daughter of the Old Covenant, whose time was the time of lovers when the Lord had spread His garment over Israel (see Ez 16:8), and the Ecclesia of the New Covenant, the bride of Christ, who lovingly carries in her bosom the mystery of Redemption through the ages. Some of the most astonishing of these encounters, where mystery touches upon mystery, take place in the liturgy of the Church. One of these, though no longer part of liturgical practice, still merits examination, not in a sterile quest of past events but in search of a deeper understanding of things to come. For history moves incessantly, inexorably, toward the day when the two who are mothers of Abraham's children (see Gal 4:22-31) will lose themselves in a supreme embrace, the force of which will satisfy the world's innermost yearning.

The liturgical meeting between Synagogue and Church I should like to discuss was assigned to the coronation day of the pope, to his introduction into the Lateran basilica and palace, and also to certain annual ceremonies. It is usually called "The Act of Homage" or "The Offering of the Law" but from a more sharply focused point of view I prefer to call it "The Pope's Veneration of the Law." On the occasions mentioned, a deputation of the Jewish community went forth from their quarters, led by their presiding civil officer and their rabbi, the rabbi carrying a Torah scroll covered with a gold-embroidered veil. The delegation stationed itself at an appointed place by which the papal procession was to pass. Upon the pope's arrival, the Jews hailed him with songs of praise in their sacred tongue; the rabbi, on bended knee, unveiled the scroll, offered it to the pope, praised the Law, and requested its veneration by the pope. The pope in turn took the scroll and answered with words that, in the course of time, had become a set formula:

The holy Law, you Hebrew men, we praise and venerate, for through Moses' hands almighty God gave it to your fathers. But your observance and unavailing interpretation of the Law we reject, for the Redeemer whom you await in vain has long since come, as the apostolic faith teaches

and proclaims: our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, world without end.³

After adding his promise of protection, the pope returned the scroll over his shoulder and continued on his way.⁴

II

THE origin of the pope's veneration of the Torah and of the homage offered by the Jews of Rome is shrouded in the historical darkness that covers most of the early Middle Ages. The story of the end of this thousand-year-old ceremony, however, is well known: It took place for the last time on June 21, 1846, when Pius IX solemnly entered the Lateran. The loss of the pope's temporal power over Rome in 1870 and the ensuing voluntary captivity of the popes in the Vatican rendered their introduction into the Basilica impossible.

A ceremony of homage seems to have been performed by the Roman Jews in the days of the ancient emperors.⁵ When the rule of the popes succeeded that of the emperors, the ceremony may have remained essentially the same, but if it did, it certainly acquired a new meaning, for then the religious aspect became the focal point. We know of Hebrew acclamations being offered in other places and on other occasions, as, for instance, at the entry of King Guntram into Orléans in

3. In Latin the pope's answer, as given in Patrizi's *Caeremoniale*, reads: *Sanctam Legem, Viri Hebraei, et laudamus, et veneramur, utpote quae ab Omnipotenti Deo per manus Moysis Patribus vestris tradita est, observantiam vero vestram, et vanam Legis interpretationem damnamus, et improbamus, quia Salvatorem, quem adhuc frustra expectatis, Apostolica Fides jam pridem advenisse docet, et praedicat Dominum Jesum Christum, qui cum Patre, et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum.* (See "De Judaeis, et Lege" in Agostini Patrizi's *Caeremoniale Romanum*, lib. I, tit. 2, cap. 21, ed. Josephus Catalanus, *Sacrarum Caeremoniarum libri tres*, Rome, 1751, I, 129.)

4. For a general treatment of the ceremony see Ferdinand Gregorovius, *Das Ghetto und die Juden in Rom*, ed. Leo Baeck (Berlin: Schocken, 1935), pp. 34-44; Hermann Vogelstein and Paul Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom* (Berlin: Mayer and Müller, 1895-96), I, 264, and the abridged translation of this work by Hermann Vogelstein and Moses Hadas, *Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1940), p. 129. See also Giacomo Blustein, *Storia degli Ebrei in Roma del 140 av. Cr. fino ad oggi* (Rome: P. Maglione e C. Strini, 1921), pp. 55, 68; Ermanno Leovinson, *Roma Israelitica. Wanderungen eines Juden durch die Kunststätten Roms* (Frankfurt: Kauffmann, 1927), pp. 85, 158-159. Most of the historical material on the participation of the Jews in this pontifical ceremony can be found in Francesco Cancellieri, *Storia de' solenni possessi de' Sommi Pontefici detti anticamente processioni o processioni dopo la loro coronazione dalla Basilica Vaticana all' Lateranense* (Rome, 1802).

5. See Gregorovius, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

585. Again, in a book of ceremonies from the first half of the eleventh century, purporting to represent the ceremonial of the emperor and his court, we read that on the occasion of his coronation the Jews of Rome were obliged to acclaim the emperor in Hebrew.⁶ What we are told is not altogether new but it permits a conclusion of great importance, for the text implies that the Jews of Rome were at that time, and probably had been for a long time, a corporate entity, a *schola*.⁷

There were many *scholae*, each of which had a definite, circumscribed relationship to the religious, social, and political life of medieval Rome. As a *schola* the Jews enjoyed status. Since the above-mentioned book of imperial ceremonies was largely an appropriation of papal rites by an antipapalist of the imperial faction, the obligation incumbent on the Jewish community to acclaim the emperor may well have included that of acclaiming the pope. Although we have no documents from that century about Jewish participation in pontifical ceremonies, this conclusion is entirely in line with historical material from later times in which the function of the Jews at the coronation ceremonies of pope and emperor is invariably mentioned.⁸

The first of these reports known to us was made in 1119 when Pope Calixtus II, having been elected in Cluny and crowned in Vienne, made his solemn entry into Rome. According to a contemporary historian, the Jews offered homage in Hebrew: To "the harmonious chanting of the Greeks and the Latins there were joined the acclamations of the Jews. . . ." ⁹ The presentation of the scroll of the Law is first mentioned in connection with a papal ceremony that took place

6. See *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio*, ed. Percy E. Schramm (Leipzig: Bibliothek Warburg, 1929), II, 101-102. See also Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae. A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley: University of California, 1946). An important aspect of the acclamations, *laudes*, is revealed in one of the author's footnotes: "The underlying idea . . . was to offer acclamations in the three sacred languages, i.e. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin in accordance with the trilingual acclamation of the Lord (Jn 19:20)." (*Ibid.*, p. 27, n. 44.)

7. See Ferdinand Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter* (4th ed.; Stuttgart, 1890), III, 455, n. 1. See also Vogelstein-Rieger, *op. cit.*, p. 211; Abraham Berliner, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt: Kauffmann, 1893), II, 8; Blustein, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Vogelstein-Hadas, *op. cit.*, p. 129. The opinion of these authors that the book of ceremonies derived from the court of Emperor Otto III is now superseded through the studies of Percy E. Schramm, *op. cit.*

8. See Vogelstein-Hadas, *op. cit.*, p. 129; Vogelstein-Rieger, *op. cit.*, I, 264.

9. Uodalscalus, *De Eginone et Herimanno in Vitae Pontificum Romanorum*, ed. Johann B. Watterich (Leipzig, 1862), II, 138-139, whose remarks are far from friendly. See also Vogelstein-Rieger, *op. cit.*, I, 219.

outside the city of Rome. In 1130, Innocent II had been elected pope and installed in the Lateran by a small group of cardinals; within two hours, another group of cardinals elected Cardinal Pierleone, who called himself Anacletus II. He was of Jewish descent, which may explain the silence of contemporary reports on the participation of the Jewish community in his installation.

Innocent II was forced to leave Rome and went to France. That same year, he celebrated Holy Week and Easter in the Abbey of St. Denis in Paris and, according to the description left us by the abbot, "the Synagogue of the Jews of Paris" participated in a triumphant Easter procession through the streets of the city. They offered the Pope "the writing of the Law, that is, a veiled scroll," and obtained from his lips what the chronicler calls a "supplication of mercy and tenderness: May almighty God remove the veil from your hearts."¹⁰ The chronicler does not describe the feelings of the Jews and probably did not know them. It is difficult to assume that they thought the pope's prayer tender and merciful, though that was its spirit.

In 1145, when Eugenius III in the company of large crowds took possession of the Lateran, "the Jews were not missing on this joyful occasion," carrying "on their shoulders the Law of Moses."¹¹ Before Alexander III (1159-1181) made his solemn entry into Rome in 1165, he spent the night in Ostia. The next morning he was met by a great number of clergy and people at "the Lateran Gate," today's Porta San Giovanni. "The Jews, too, came and, according to custom, carried the Law in their arms."¹² Again in 1187, when Clement III, who had been elected and consecrated in Pisa, arrived at Rome, the Jews were of the company of those who received him "with great joy, with song and praise."¹³

At times, historians are silent on the participation of Jews in such solemnities; they simply say that everything was performed "in accordance with the old and established custom," as does the report of the introduction of Innocent III into the Lateran in 1198.¹⁴ "The old

10. Suger, Abbot of St. Denis, is thus quoted in the *Vita Ludovici Grossi* (PL 186:1332). See also Vogelstein-Rieger, *op. cit.*, I, 222.

11. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Louis Duchesne (Paris: Thorin, 1886-92), II, 387.

12. Watterich, *op. cit.*, II, 401; see also Horace Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1925-33), X, 79, n. 3.

13. *Annales Romani* in *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, II, 349.

14. See *Gesta Innocentii*, V (PL 214:19-20).

and established custom" must have included the Jews, who had become so essential a part of papal ceremonial that their presence and function are mentioned in the liturgical books that both describe and govern pontifical ceremonies.

The Roman *Ordo XI*, compiled by Benedictus, a Canon of St. Peter's probably during the pontificate of Innocent II (1130-1143), speaks of the homage of the Jews at a solemn papal procession through the city of Rome on Easter Monday, as the Pope returned to his residence in the Lateran from St. Peter's where Mass had been celebrated that day.

After the Mass he is crowned in front of the basilica of St. Peter . . . and, wearing the crown, he returns in procession to the [Lateran] palace by this sacred way: through the Gate, over the Bridge [Ponte di Sant' Angelo], underneath the Arch of Triumph of the Emperors Theodosius, Valentinian, and Gratian [today the Basilica of San Celso], and [through the Via dei Banchi] by the Palace of Chromatius [across from the Church Santa Lucia in Gonfalone], where the Jews offer their acclamations. . . .¹⁵

Another source, the *ordo* of Albinus, written between 1183 and 1188, relates that the scroll of the Law was offered on this festive occasion, and speaks of "the appointed place" for its presentation.¹⁶

Cencius de Sabellis, who is usually called Cencius Camerarius and later became Pope Honorius III (1216-1227), compiled the *Ordo Romanus XII* which was in use as early as 1192. He, too, knew of the procession on Easter Monday and of the participation of the Jewish community in it. To this he adds an interesting detail: "For these acclamations they receive from the treasurer twenty solidi as *presbyterium*," a distribution of money made by the pope to the *scholae*, the various clerical and lay associations who rendered services to him and to his court.¹⁷ In a special chapter about this *presbyterium*, we are told that it was given twice a year, at Christmas and at Easter; that seventeen different *scholae* were entitled to it; that the Jews, although

15. *Ordo Rom. XI*, cap. 51, ed. Johannes Mabillon and Michael Germain (Paris: Montalant, 1724), II, 143; *Le Liber Censuum de l'Eglise Romaine*, ed. Paul Fabre and Louis Duchesne (Paris: Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1905-10), II, 154b; see also *ibid.*, 163, n. 51.

16. See *Ordo Romanus de consuetudinibus et observantiis Romanae ecclesiae in precipuis sollempnitatibus*, cap. 37, *Liber Censuum*, ed. Fabre-Duchesne, II, 132b.

17. See *Ordo Rom. XII*, cap. 38, Mabillon II, 188; also *Liber Censuum*, ed. Fabre-Duchesne, I, 299a.

listed last, were paid the highest amount, while the others received various sums, from four to ten solidi.¹⁸ Cencius, then, furnishes final proof of the status of the Jews of medieval Rome as a *schola*. As such, they were a recognized community with appropriate rights and duties which were recorded in the official documents of the Curia; they held, at least as far as their official relationship to the Church was concerned, a place of respect.

Cencius explains that the *presbyterium* was distributed to the different *scholae* "because of the services they rendered to the Roman Curia."¹⁹ According to him, it was the province of the Jews to "present the Law to the pope on the day of coronation, offer him the acclamations, and bring to the treasury three and a half pounds of pepper and two and a half pounds of cinnamon."²⁰ The last service is a rather surprising detail for it indicates that in the Middle Ages certain delicacies of the table could be obtained only through the help of the Jews. When discussing the pope's consecration in St. Peter's, Cencius states that the ritual for the subsequent solemn procession to the Lateran was the same as that for Easter Monday,²¹ and mentions the Jews again as one of the "*scholae* of the papal palace" and thus entitled to the *presbyterium* for their presentation of the Law, as were clergy and laity for the services of "censer and bow."²² He also relates that, should the pope be consecrated outside Rome, the *presbyterium* would be cut in half for most *scholae* but not for the Jews, the priests of the City, and others.²³

Aside from reports of a stereotyped nature, as those of the celebration for Gregory IX (1227-1241)²⁴ and Innocent IV (1243-1254),²⁵ we also owe to the thirteenth century an important text as well as a poetic description of the coronation. The text is part of the *Caeremoniale* of Gregory X (1271-1276), the *Ordo Romanus XIII*, and

18. See *Ordo Rom. XII*, cap. 42, Mabillon II, 195-196; also Emmanuel Rodocanachi, *Le Saint-Siège et les juifs* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1891), p. 129.

19. *Ordo Rom. XII*, cap. 42, Mabillon II, 196.

20. *Ordo Rom. XII*, cap. 56, Mabillon II, 200; see also *Liber Censuum*, ed. Fabre-Duchesne, I, 306b.

21. See *Ordo Rom. XII*, cap. 82, Mabillon II, 213; also *Liber Censuum*, ed. Fabre-Duchesne, I, 312b.

22. See *ibid.*

23. See *Ordo Rom. XII*, cap. 85, Mabillon II, 214; also *Liber Censuum*, ed. Fabre-Duchesne, I, 313a-b.

24. See *Vita Gregorii IX*, cap. 4; also *Liber Censuum*, ed. Fabre-Duchesne, II, 19.

25. See Mann, *op. cit.*, XIV, 281-295.

is the first to mention that a member of the papal family threw coins into the crowd from an elevated spot. It also explains the purpose of the handing of the Law to the pope: that he may venerate it.²⁶

The poetic text is found in Cardinal Gaetano Stefaneschi's hexametric description of the coronation of Pope Boniface VIII on January 23, 1295. In free translation it reads:

*See the Pope, mounted on a horse,
Crossing the Tiber on the Marble Bridge!
Leaving behind the Tower of the Field,
He is met by the Jews, singing, but blind of heart.
To him, the Prince, right here in Parione,
Moses' Law is shown, pregnant with Christ.
Him he adored, in this Law prefigured; over the shoulder
He then returned the scroll with measured words.*²⁷

If in reading the ceremonial text of Gregory X someone should ask: "Did the pope really venerate the Torah scroll?" the poem gives the answer: *veneratus et ille*. . . . If he should ask further: "How did the pope venerate the Torah?" the Cardinal offers no information nor does anyone else. Perhaps the pope bowed to the scroll and kissed it. Though the Cardinal does not describe the manner of veneration, he does give the reason for it. To the pope as to the Church, the Torah is a woman with child, and that child is the Christ. He is hidden in it, enveloped in its words and deeds. It is this center the Church venerates, worships, and adores. Without it, the Torah would be like a frame that

26. See *Ordo Rom.* XIII, cap. 10, Mabillon II, 230; also Michel Andrieu, *Le Pontifical Romain au moyen-âge* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica, 1938-40), II, 537, no. 66. A perhaps ambiguous direction in the ceremonial, to be followed whenever the pope was consecrated or elected outside Rome, has led some Jewish authors to see in its provisions a deliberate humiliation of the Jews. In their opinion the Jewish delegation was obliged to go far outside the city, to a church dedicated to Mary Magdalen who, according to them, was once considered the patroness of lepers (a title for which I have found no support), simply to demonstrate that the Jewish position in medieval society was a degraded one. But the directions given to the Jews also bound the cardinals and the Curia.

27. *Ecce super Tyberim positum de marmore pontem
Transierat provectus equo; turrique relictā
de Campo, Judaea canens, quae caecula corde est,
Occurrit vesana Duci Parione sub ipso,
Qua Christo gravidam Legem plenamque sub umbra
Exhibuit Moysis veneratus et ille figuram
Hanc post terga dedit cauto sermone locutus.*

Gaetano Stefaneschi, "Opus Metricum," *Vita Bonifatii VIII* (lib. II, cap. 5), ed. Franz X. Seppelt, *Monumenta Coelestiniana* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1921).

holds no canvas. The painting is there but Israel, blinded by the beauty of the frame, does not see the greater beauty that it serves.

As far as I know, this is the only text that mentions the pope returning the scroll "over the shoulder." It must have been this passage that gave rise to the interpretation, widely held by Jewish historians and scholars as well as by popular belief, that the pope let the scroll "contemptuously . . . fall over his shoulder."²⁸ How could the pope have treated "contemptuously" what, a moment before, he had praised as having come from God? And did not the scroll contain the same Scriptures the Church in her liturgy had ever treated with the utmost respect? In the absence of more complete information, the intended significance of returning the scroll over the shoulder is impossible to establish. Still, in a way, the pope was doing what the head of the Jewish delegation himself had done: He had carried the scroll on his shoulder and had taken it into his hands; the pope, too, must have taken the scroll into his hands in order to pass it over his shoulder. Possibly, this rite was the central act of veneration: By putting the scroll on his shoulder, the pope may have wished to show that the Church identifies herself with the Torah as much as the Synagogue does, though for the Church it is prophet of and tutor to Christ (see Gal 3:24).

The same Cardinal compiled a book of pontifical ceremonies; it is the substance of the *Ordo Romanus XIV*. For his description of the presentation of the Torah he uses the *Caeremoniale* of Gregory X. Of the pope's "measured words" he has this to say: "Then the pope praises the Law but condemns the way in which the Jews observe or understand it, because He whom they say is to come, the Church

28. Vogelstein-Hadas, *op. cit.*, p. 130. To interpret the meaning of this particular ceremony as "rather a humiliation than a distinction" (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, X, 127; see also Rodocanachi, *op. cit.*, pp. 122, 129-130, 155), is to misunderstand it. Vogelstein-Hadas (*op. cit.*, p. 129) put it well: "The obligation of the Jews to participate in the ceremonial of homage involved nothing degrading; on the contrary, they were on equal footing with the other *scholae* in this respect." Yet they continue: "It was only in the form of the homage and its reception by the pope that the inferior position of the Jews was made plain" (*ibid.*, pp. 129-130). The same misunderstanding blemishes the otherwise remarkable *Roma Israelitica* by Loevinson, which is as essential a guide to the Christian visitor of the Eternal City as the Old Testament is for the understanding of the New. The author considers, for instance, the words of the pope in returning the Torah scroll as a "mocking remark" (*op. cit.*, p. 158; see also pp. 87, 264-265). The present study, I hope, will show that the Jews, at least at the time of their homage to the pope, were treated as equals and regarded with true respect.

teaches and proclaims as already come, Jesus the Christ."²⁹ The Cardinal mentions the presentation of the sacred scroll a second time, in a ritual for the installation of the pope outside the city of Rome; the presentation must have been considered essential since it is prescribed even under these irregular circumstances. He mentions the throwing of coins, adds a touching phrase when describing the arrival of the pope at the place where the Jews stood: "There the Lord Pope tarries for a little while," tells of the offering of the Law "for veneration," and gives the words of the pope as quoted before.³⁰ The veneration of the Law is mentioned a third time in this book of ceremonies: in the *ordo* of the pope's consecration in St. Peter's basilica, which Cardinal Stefaneschi found in a thirteenth-century pontifical of the Papal Curia.³¹

An interesting proof for the unfailing observance of the rite is furnished in accounts of the election and coronation of the last anti-pope, Duke Amadeo VIII of Savoy, who called himself Felix V. His coronation took place in Basel on June 24, 1440. The participation of the Jewish community is one of the few recorded details of that festivity.³² All in all, Cardinal Stefaneschi's *ordo* remained in use until the end of the fifteenth century.

In unpleasant contrast to the splendor of papal solemnities stands the behavior of the Roman people in the days of the Renaissance. They tried, not without violence, to seize the precious objects of the procession, the papal baldachin, for instance, and the pope's white horse, or the gold-adorned Torah scroll of the Jewish community. On

29. *Ordo Rom.* XIV, cap. 20, Mabillon II, 259. The pope's answer is variously quoted as *Confirmamus, sed non consentimus* or as *Legem probo, sed improbo gentem*. The first reading is, for instance, that of Julius R. Haarhaus, *Rom. Wanderung durch die Ewige Stadt und ihre Umgebung* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: Seemann, 1925, p. 173). Rodocanachi (*op. cit.*, p. 122) sees in the second form of the pope's answer (which I think inauthentic because the pope always uses the plural of majesty) *un sophisme*, with the help of which the popes avoided facing the Jewish problem. I found this distorted version of the pope's answer for the first time in the fifteenth century humanist, Jacopo di Scarperia whose *Epistola ad Eman. Crisolarum* was published by L. Mehus in Florence in the year 1743.

30. See *Ordo Rom.* XIV, cap. 39, Mabillon II, 268. The immediately following chapter 40, *De Lege offerenda per Judaeos et responsione Papae* (Mabillon II, 268) is almost identical with the description in cap. 20.

31. See *Ordo Rom.* XIV, cap. 40, Mabillon II, 275.

32. See Johannes de Segovia, *Historia Gestorum Generalis Synodi Basiliensis*, 16, 28 in *Monumenta Conciliorum Generalium saec. XV*, ed. E. Birk (Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1883-90), III, 495.

April 20, 1455, when Calixtus III took possession of the Lateran, the people rioted, and the Pope almost lost his life.³³ A similar incident, though less serious, disturbed the procession of Pius II on September 3, 1458.³⁴ Paul II (1464-1471) took measures to prevent any disorder on the day he assumed possession of the Lateran,³⁵ yet violence broke out in 1471, at the beginning of the reign of Sixtus IV, and again a pope's life was endangered.³⁶

On these occasions, the Jews were often victims of the mobs. Thus when Innocent VIII, who had been elected on August 29, 1484, was installed, the Jewish community requested that, for its protection, the ceremony of its homage and of the pope's veneration of the Law be performed at the Castel Sant' Angelo, and Innocent granted the request. So we read in the diary of John Burckard, papal master of ceremonies.³⁷ In his description of the solemnity, which took place on September 12, we are told for the first time what the Jews said to the pope, at least as Burckard understood it: "Holy Father, in the name of our synagogue, we Hebrew men implore that Your Holiness deign to confirm and approve the Mosaic Law, which almighty God gave to Moses, our shepherd, on Mount Sinai, as the other supreme pontiffs, Your Holiness's predecessors, have confirmed and approved it."³⁸ We do not know if the Jews hailed the pope in the manner of the acclamations of the early Middle Ages; it may well be that Burckard gives no

33. See Ludwig von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste* (Freiburg: Herder, 1955), I, 671; see also Cancellieri, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

34. See Pastor, *op. cit.*, II, 16.

35. See *ibid.*, II, 304.

36. See *ibid.*, II, 462. As the incidents quoted show, these acts of violence were not directed primarily against the Jews as Jews and do not, therefore, justify the conclusion drawn by Vogelstein-Hadas: "The mob often took such occasions to make the Jews painfully aware of their inferiority" (*op. cit.*, p. 130).

37. See Johannes Burckard, *Liber notarum*, ed. Enrico Celani (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1907-13), I, 67. In Cod. 6324 fol. 224 of the Nationalbibliothek of Vienna, the initiative for this change is attributed to Pope Innocent himself, who wished to forestall any violence against the Jews on the part of the Roman people, *ne a Romanis, ut alias factum est, opprimantur*.

38. The Latin acclamation of the Jewish delegation was: *Beatissime Pater, nos viri hebrei, nomine sinagoge nostre supplicamus Sanctitatem vestram ut legem mosaycam ab omnipotenti Deo Moysi pastori nostro in monte Synai traditam nobis confirmare et approbare dignemini, quemadmodum alii summi pontifices, S. V. predecessores illam confirmarunt et approbarunt*. To this the pope replied: *Comendamus legem, vestram autem observantiam et intellectum condemnamus, quia quem venturum dicitis, Ecclesia docet et predicat venisse Dominum Nostrum Jesum Christum*. So, at least, was Burckard's recollection.

account because he did not understand what they sang or said. He does record, however, the pope's answer, which followed the *ordo* of Cardinal Stefaneschi; he also makes clear that it was because of the insolence of the Roman population that the meeting between the pope and the Jewish community was transferred from Monte Giordano to the Castel Sant' Angelo.

By order of Innocent VIII, the ceremonial in use at the pontifical court was revised by Agostino Patrizi, his master of ceremonies, a task finished in 1488. According to Patrizi, the Jews praised the Law in Hebrew; in the same tongue they entreated the pope to venerate it—not merely to confirm and approve it, as Burckard had recorded. It is Patrizi who gives the exact wording of the pope's answer. He also stresses that the Jews, so as not to be oppressed by the large crowds, would ask to take their place at the lower wall of the Castel Sant' Angelo, "on the corner of the road which leads to the [Vatican] palace."³⁹ His are the final instructions the presentation of the Torah received from the pen of a professional master of ceremonies. Theoretically speaking, they are still in force, though they have been abrogated by the law of custom. Until the rite was last performed in 1846, minor changes were made occasionally, but these did not substantially affect it.⁴⁰ Its meaning and impact, however, to some extent still understood at the close of the fifteenth century, soon became obscure.

39. See Catalanus, *op. cit.*, I, 129.

40. Julius II was the first pope who celebrated his coronation and the taking possession of the Lateran on different days (see Pastor, *op. cit.*, III, 702-703, n. 4). On December 5, 1503, during his procession to the Lateran, Pope Julius received the Jewish delegation near the Castel Sant' Angelo—according to John Burckard, who had been present. He comments on the length of the Jewish address (*Judei fecerunt longum sermonem*) and tells us—as far as I know for the first time in history—who the speaker was: the Spanish Rabbi Samuel Zarfati who also was the Pope's private physician. The Pontiff himself answered as the ceremonial required (*prout in libello*). (See Burckard, *op. cit.*, II, 418.) On March 19, 1513, the day Leo X took possession of the Lateran, the Jews were on a balcony and held burning candles in their hands (see *ibid.* I, 67, n. 2). Innocent X, who celebrated this act on October 4, 1644, transferred the function of the Jews to a place near the Colosseum, where it was held from thereon: The choice of this site was probably determined by its topographical closeness to the Jewish ghetto and by the fact that the more open areas there offered to the Jewish delegation a higher degree of safety. Loevinson's assumption that this site was chosen in a deliberate affront of the Jews of Rome, *als ausgemachte Erniedrigung ihrer Menschenwürde* (*op. cit.*, p. 87), who thus were forced to decorate the areas between the Arch of Titus and the Colosseum—both monuments meant to perpetuate the glory of the destroyer of Jerusalem—rests on no historical foundation.

III

HISTORY, liturgics, folklore, sociology, musicology—all may claim interest in the unique ceremony of the pope's veneration of the Torah; this analysis attempts to explore its theological significance.

A salient feature, revealing itself mainly in the ceremonial texts, is this: Rather than representing a mere meeting between the Jews and the Christians of Rome, the ceremony is an encounter between the Jewish community and the Bishop of Rome as the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church. At least, this is the impression I gather from the throwing of coins into the crowds and its relationship to the whole ceremony. Although the immediate purpose of this strange custom was to divert the attention of the Roman multitude from the pope as well as from the Jews and thus to guarantee safety for both, it also seems to indicate the pope's wish to be alone with the Jews.

Their meeting was not to be disturbed by the hostility of the ignorant, the conceited, or the bearers of ill will. He wanted to approach the Jews on a new level, unhampered by the past, unhampered by the pain of centuries, and he wanted the Jews to approach him in the same manner. By stopping on his way and tarrying with them for a little while he, Christ's vicar, brought once again Christ's presence to His people. To the Jews, the very existence of the Christian world seems antinomic: The God of Christians is a God of love and their Saviour a man of mercy but, in spite of this, the world of Christians is often a world without charity, a world of injustice and cruelty. The Jews are, and for so long have been, weary of this contradiction, even though it has its counterpart in Jewish life. But for a moment all this was held in suspense so that—if He had willed it—the impossible might have come to pass.

For a moment the pope was close to the Jews, and they were close to him. The scroll of the Torah on the rabbi's shoulder was a symbol of Israel under the Law—the yoke of which St. Peter had said that it lay heavily on him and his brethren (see Ac 15:10). After the rabbi took the scroll from his shoulder, he held it in his hands. It was veiled, hidden away from sight, as is the custom of the Orient with anything precious, sacred, and venerable. Within the sight and touch of the pope the rabbi removed the veil and unfolded the scroll. While he

held the Torah at one end, the pope reached for the other.⁴¹ As he looked on the archaic letters, unfamiliar to him, he was aware of Moses on the mountain, his face radiant with the glory of the Lord (see Ex 34:29); he was aware, too, that this document of the Ancient Covenant had been given to the forefathers of those standing beside him—his fathers in the spirit, but not his fathers in the flesh. In awe of the mystery that is Israel and in anguish of heart, he must have prayed for the Jewish people with the love the Church inherited from St. Paul: Even as your rabbi removed the veil from the scroll, "may almighty God remove the veil [of not knowing the Christ] from your hearts." It is recorded history that, in 1130, Innocent II uttered this prayer aloud; one may assume that his successors prayed as he did.

As Burckard reports it, the address of the Jews to the pope was rather matter-of-fact; they were mainly concerned with obtaining the pope's confirmation of the Law as a guarantee of their way of life. His report does not include the words of the medieval acclamations once considered essential, nor does it mention the delegation's request that the pope venerate the Law; it does mention, however, one moving expression of the Jews: the designation of Moses as their shepherd.⁴²

The pope's answer should be analyzed, I think, word by word:

Sanctam Legem: The emphatic inversion of the adjective reveals what struck him first upon beholding the Torah scroll. It is sacred! His *Sanctam Legem* paralleled the words with which he had begun the Gospel at the morning's Mass: *Sequentia Sancti Evangelii*, "The continuation of the holy Gospel." Both, the Law and the Gospel, are holy.

Viri Hebraei: He addressed them by the same honored title with which they had presented themselves to him. His *Viri Hebraei* echoed St. Peter's sermon on Pentecost, when he called the men of Jerusalem *Viri Judaei* (Ac 2:14). They also evoked St. Paul's *Viri Israelitae* at Antioch (Ac 13:16) and his *Hebraei sunt* (2 Cor 11:22),

41. This is the manner in which the homage of the Jews is pictured on the occasion of the coronation of the German Emperor Henry VII in 1312 as found in the *Codex Balduini Trevirensis*. It shows the scroll held on one end by the emperor, on the other by a Jew, and the emperor as inspecting or reading it. (See *Die Romfahrt Kaiser Heinrichs VII im Bildercyclus des Codex Bald. Trev.*, Berlin: Kgl. preuss. Staatsarchiv, 1881, pp. 80-81.) The picture is also reproduced by Vogelstein-Hadas.

42. Loevinson (*op. cit.*, p. 159) maintains that Rome's chief rabbi rendered homage to the pope as the successor of the pagan *pontifex maximus* as well as of the Jewish high priest. It seems superfluous to point out that such thoughts must have been entirely alien to the minds of the medieval Jews of Rome.

to which the pope, however, could not add the Apostle's proud *et ego*.

Et laudamus et veneramur: With praise and reverence for the Law he acceded to their request. For one short moment the Jews of Rome and the Pontiff of the Roman Church were one—sign and pledge of things to come.

Ab Omnipotenti Deo per manus Moysis patribus vestris, the pope declared and thus extolled the Law, the glory of Israel standing at his side. Through the hands of Moses, God's goodness had given it to the fathers of those before him. Yet to stop at this would have meant a shortening of God's saving design.

Vanam Legis interpretationem, the pope continued. He did not reproach the people or argue with them; still he could not remain silent and thus betray the Christ. In remaining silent, would he not also have failed them? Hence he had to speak: The Law is full of Christ, but their vision, fixed on its many regulations, does not see its center.

Frustra expectatis: The pope was convinced that they waited in vain, that no coming would crown their hope, unless it was the return of Him whom they did not expect.

Jesum Christum: Him they must meet, Him they will meet. But this will be in days to come; hence the pope, His vicar, wished to make Him present in their midst by the doxology. In this prayer of praise lay the deepest meaning of the pope's address.

The liturgical *ordo* does not designate that anyone should say "Amen." Israel herself will pronounce it, on the day that God alone knows, at the hour He has appointed from eternity.

IV

THE Church looks at the Jews with the eyes of Christ: "If thou hadst known . . . the things that are for thy peace! But now they are hidden from thy eyes" (Lk 19:42). Thus her great desire that Israel may know peace to the fullest. The attitude, however, of the medieval empire toward the Jews was quite different. As Monsignor Journet explains:

Based on the sacral concept of society, which counted only Christians as citizens . . . but based also on a voluntary withdrawal of Jews from the Christian world around them, the medieval status of the Jews was not

in itself an injustice. Yet the narrowness and evil passions of many Christians . . . at times turned that status into something terrible.⁴³

If the history of the Middle Ages teaches one lesson, it is that the kingdom of God cannot be established by legislation. It was foolish to expect that the Jews would be drawn to Christ through laws that withheld from them their full human dignity, particularly if these laws were enacted in the name of a God who made all men brothers.

The pope's veneration of the Torah, however, cast a ray of light and consolation over the degradation Jews so often suffered; through this rite the relationship between Jews and Christians was brought under the humanizing and civilizing influence of the liturgy. Each time the ceremony took place, freedom of worship and the sovereign right of conscience were affirmed for the Jewish community. Long before the reign of Pius XI, the ceremony proclaimed to Jews and Christians alike: "Abraham is called our father. . . . Spiritually, we are Semites." Though strangers to the world around them, the Jews of Rome knew that they could lead a relatively serene life. In the days of Alexander III (1159-1181), two hundred free and prosperous Jews lived within the walls of Rome; some of them held responsible positions in the pope's own palace, one being that of his private physician.⁴⁴

The great humanists who occupied the papal throne also opposed the inhuman treatment of Jews. In 1448, Nicolas V ruled against forced assistance at Mass, and in 1459, Pius II forbade forced baptism.⁴⁵ But later the old evils thus suppressed were revived and new ones

43. *The Bridge*, II, 75. The legal status of the Jews in the Middle Ages had already been determined by the Roman Emperors Theodosius and Justinian. The Theodosian laws (XVI, 8, 1-18; Const. Sirm. 4; Nov. 3 of Theodosius II) are easily accessible in English translation in *The Theodosian Code*, ed. and trans. Clyde Pharr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 467-469, 479, 488-490. For the laws of Justinian see Peter Browe, S.J., "Die Judengesetzgebung Justinians," *Analecta Gregoriana* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1935), VIII, 109-146. These laws, based on what was understood as theological principles, denied full citizenship to the Jews. The medieval emperors renewed and confirmed the laws of Justinian and were just as much convinced that by doing so, they fulfilled the will of God, who was thought to have condemned the Jews to eternal servitude.

44. See Gregorovius, *Das Ghetto und die Juden in Rom*, pp. 29-30. As to Alexander III's protection of the Jews, see Mann, *op. cit.*, X, 235-236. Until the sixteenth century, the papal physicians were frequently Jews. The friendly relations between Jews and Christians in medieval Rome are also stressed by Blustein, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

45. See Peter Browe, S.J., *Die Judenmission im Mittelalter und die Päpste*, Vol. VI of *Miscellanea Historicae Pontificae* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1942), p. 134.

introduced.⁴⁶ Remarkably enough, the gradual decline of the relationship between Jews and Christians in Rome was accompanied by a decline of this ceremony that in the end reduced it to a mere formality. When the pope and the Curia moved to Avignon, the pontifical liturgy underwent a profound change; among the many annual celebrations eliminated was the Easter Monday procession in which the Jews had their part. After the popes returned to Rome, the ancient ceremonies were not restored, the veneration of the Torah taking place only when a new pope took possession of the Lateran.

In 1556, Pope Paul IV ordered that a ghetto be erected in the city of Rome, and it was about this time that Jewish participation in the famous Roman carnival, originally not a degrading act, began to degenerate into a shameful spectacle of humiliation.⁴⁷ Ten years after the erection of the ghetto, St. Pius V, in spite of his personal sanctity, knew so little of the ancient veneration of the Torah that he refused to receive the homage of the Jewish community at all.⁴⁸ His successors reinstated the ceremony as a quaint and colorful memory of the dead

46. For instance the forced attendance at sermons several times a year. About these sermons, see *ibid.*, pp. 14-54.

47. Paul II transferred the Roman carnival entertainments, mostly races of runners with prizes for the winner, to the main streets of Rome and organized groups of participants according to ages, etc. One such group was formed by the Jews. (See Pastor, *op. cit.*, II, 314-315.) That there was no degradation involved was first stated by Vogelstein-Hadas (*op. cit.*, pp. 231-232). That at the end of the race the Jewish participants were kicked by the *conservatori di Roma*, the city's administrators, is a legend. (See Berliner, *op. cit.*, II, 49.) For a description of the celebrations, see Gregorovius, *Das Ghetto und die Juden in Rom*, p. 34, and Blustein, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

48. See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, X, 127. Pastor (*op. cit.*, VIII, 52-53) does not mention this refusal in his description of the beginning of Pius V's pontificate, nor on pp. 243-248 where he treats of the Pope's attitude toward the Jewish people. The change in the attitude of the popes toward the Jews becomes painfully obvious to the reader of a strictly scholarly work like Moritz Stern's *Urkundliche Beiträge über die Stellung der Päpste zu den Juden* (Kiel: Fiencke, 1893). The documents issuing from the popes of the Middle Ages (Stern's collection begins with Gregory X in 1272) are nearly always acts of protection and the granting of privileges, while those of the Inquisition's heyday are mostly measures of oppression. (See also Konrad Eubel, "Zu dem Verhalten der Päpste gegen die Juden," *Römische Quartalschrift*, XIII, 1899, 29-42.) Some exaggerated statements about the plight of the Jews in Rome, for instance, that under papal rule they were abandoned to a fanaticism that gradually became legalized barbarism (see Gregorovius, *Das Ghetto und die Juden in Rom*, p. 29) were censured by Berliner (*op. cit.*, II, 10). For an objective, yet realistic presentation of these regrettable aberrations of the Christian conscience, see Franz X. Seppelt, *Geschichte der Päpste von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (2nd ed.; Munich: Kösel, 1959), V, 84-87.

past. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Jews co-operated wholeheartedly in the exterior pomp to which their participation had become an important accessory.⁴⁹ In 1831, Gregory XVI wished to receive the Torah scroll as a gift, apparently unaware that the symbolism of the ceremony was incomplete without the veneration and the return of the sacred scroll, unaware they were a sign of Israel's freedom of worship and a token of papal protection. The Jewish community extricated itself deftly: It offered the Pope a beautifully hand-written book of other Hebrew texts.⁵⁰ By then, the ceremony had lost its last vestige of meaning; the events of 1870, rendering its performance impossible, did away with a corpse.

After the loss of temporal power over the city of Rome, the popes never left the Vatican. Thus Leo XIII, St. Pius X, and Benedict XV were not able to take possession of the Lateran. On February 11, 1929, the "Roman Question" was solved by the Lateran Treaty between Pius XI and the Kingdom of Italy. Article thirteen defines the Lateran, ancient residence of the popes, as part of the papal possessions.⁵¹ But since the rest of the city was not returned to the sovereignty of the Holy See, the solemn procession of the newly elected pope to the Lateran could not be revived. Pius XI in 1929, Pius XII in 1939, and Pope John XXIII in 1958, took possession of the Lateran in a ceremony that, because of the changed historical situation, could not include an encounter with the Jewish community of Rome.

But history is, at times, a powerful genius. On March 2, 1876, Eugenio Pacelli was born in Rome on that same Monte Giordano where time and again, for at least half a millennium, the Jews of Rome had stood to greet the pope who would stay with them for a moment, venerate the sacred Torah, and assure them of his protection. Although the ceremony had not taken place for a century prior to the reign of Pius XII, its spirit was not dead. In the greatest anguish ever endured by the Jewish people, the Jews of Rome found in him a shield greater than any other their chronicles have recorded. Like the veneration of the Torah, his assistance in the days of darkness brightens

49. When on November 23, 1644, Innocent X took possession of the Lateran, the Jews laid out sixty carpets with inscriptions from the Old Testament, stretching from the Arch of Titus to the Colosseum. (See Pastor, *op. cit.*, XIV, 22.)

50. See Vogelstein-Hadas, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

51. See *Church and State through the Centuries*, ed. Sidney Z. Ehler and John B. Morrall (Westminster: Newman, 1954), pp. 382-407.

the history of the relationship between Christians and Jews. Indeed, it has become history, history capable of purifying a painful past and of opening new pathways into the future.⁵²

EDITOR'S NOTE

AS A confirmation of Monsignor Wasner's final remarks it seems appropriate to record here the words of a Jewish writer, Dr. Joseph Lichten, on the compassion of Pius XII.

"When the Fascist regime in Italy started to expel Jewish citizens from governmental and scientific positions, the Pope invited many of them to the Vatican. The president and two professors of the University of Rome and a famous geographer, all Jews ousted by the Fascists, received important positions in the Vatican City. . . .

"When Rabbi Herzog appealed to Pius XII from Jerusalem, the Pontiff answered that he would do 'all in my power to end the persecution of the Jews.'

"Thousands of Jewish refugees poured into Vatican City; thousands of others sought shelter in the basilicas and other buildings of the Holy See outside the Vatican wall. No less than 15,000 were sheltered at Castel Gandolfo. The Pope sent by hand a letter to the bishops instructing them to lift the enclosure from convents and monasteries so that they could become refuges for the Jews. When the Nazis forbade ritual slaughter, the Pope sent *shohetim* into Vatican City to perform the ritual slaughter there and store food for Jews sheltered there. Throughout the city, priests and nuns often at great personal risk smuggled Jews to places of sanctuary in churches, monasteries and other institutions. More than 180 places of refuge were made available in Rome and secret asylum given to more than 7,000 fugitive Jews. . . .

"Once, the Chief Rabbi of Rome was summoned and told that he was expected to deliver to German authorities—by noon of the following day—one million lire and one hundred pounds of gold. If he

52. See the chapter "Protector of the Persecuted" in Piero Bargellini's *Pius XII, The Angelic Shepherd* (New York: Good Shepherd, 1950), pp. 133-143.

failed, the Nazis said, they would order the immediate dispersal of Jews—which meant atrocities and death. The Jewish community of Rome did not have one hundred pounds of gold and the Chief Rabbi appealed for help to Pius XII. The Pope immediately instructed the Vatican treasurer to raise whatever amount was still needed. In less than a day, by melting down religious vessels, one hundred pounds of gold were raised.

"Italian Jews know how much they owed to Pius XII. A prominent Jewish citizen of Rome declared: 'Our Catholic brothers have done more for us than we can ever do to repay.' And another Jew, at a meeting of the National Committee of Liberation, said: 'It was in the name of the frankest feeling of Brotherhood that the Church did its utmost to rescue our threatened people from destruction. The supreme ecclesiastical authorities and all those priests who suffered for us in imprisonment and in concentration camps have our eternal gratitude.' "

("Pope Pius XII and the Jews," *Anti-Defamation League Bulletin*, October 1958.)

James J. Brodrick, S.J.

ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA AND THE JEWS

THE religious problem of Spain in the sixteenth century was far more complicated than that confronting any other European nation of the time. In England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries, the struggle for unity of belief, then considered essential as a safeguard for political unity, was being waged at least between various Christian communities, whereas in Spain the Christian majority had to face powerful and unassimilable minorities of Jews and Moslems. The political unification of Spain had come about through the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon with Isabella of Castile, whom Spaniards like to designate "the Catholic Kings."

In 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella brought to a victorious conclusion the centuries-long crusade against the Moors by the conquest of their last enclave in the country, the Kingdom of Granada. At first, the Moslems were given very generous terms of surrender in the hope that they would be won over to the Christian faith, but the results were meager while the severe measures of Cardinal Cisneros provoked rebellion. Many of the Moors sold their holdings in Spain and went to North Africa; the majority, however, remained and constituted the mass of the rural population in eastern Andalusia, Valencia, and Aragon where, on account of their skill as farmers and artisans, they enjoyed the protection of aristocratic landowners. They also formed tightly organized communities in nearly all Spanish cities, and their mosques were everywhere. Spain at that time was populated by about ten million people; of these, at least half a million were Moslems.

Through long association, Catholics had become accustomed to these Arab-Berber aliens, but their tolerance was not without a certain amount of contempt. For another group of non-Christians, even longer on Spanish soil than the Moors, Catholics, especially of the lower classes, felt only fear and hatred. Those so feared were the Jews, who

had flourished on the Iberian Peninsula as they had nowhere else on earth since the time of King Solomon.

I

IN THE course of the centuries, quite a few Jewish families accepted the Christian faith with deep sincerity and became part of the Spanish people. Many of these converts married into the proudest aristocratic "old Catholic" circles, which for the most part descended from the ancient Aryan Visigoths. When, in the sixth century, these Romanized barbarians became Catholics under King Reccared, they signaled, alas, their conversion by persecuting the Jews, whom the pagan power of Rome in Spain had left unmolested. It was natural enough that "the first gleam of a Moorish scimitar" on the Spanish coast turned the Spanish Jews into allies of the invading Moslems, under whose long rule they prospered in the development of science and trade and commerce.

As the *Reconquista* pursued its slow, heroic course through the centuries, the Spanish kings, like their Moorish foes, learned to respect the Jews. They cultivated property, held public office, and many had become wealthy. Their prosperity, however, aroused jealousy; they were obliged to pay large subsidies to the kings, and this forced them into the practice of usury and positions as financial administrators. There was so much intermarriage between wealthy Jewish families and aristocratic but impoverished Catholic families that, according to a book generally considered to have been written by Cardinal Francisco de Mendoza y Bobadilla, there was scarcely a noble family in Spain without a trace of Jewish blood. If the Cardinal was really the author, his book might have been an *apologia pro domo sua*, for he himself bore a Jewish and also a Moorish name.¹

The privileged position of the Jews in Spain suffered disastrous reverses as the Middle Ages moved toward their close. The estates of many spendthrift Catholic nobles had become mortgaged to Jewish moneylenders, a situation that bred bitterness among the upper classes and led them to look favorably at the antagonism of the common

1. I have not had access to *El Tizon de la española*, which was published anonymously, and take what I have written from Feliciano Cereceda, S.J., *Diego Lainez en la Europa religiosa de su Tiempo* (Madrid, 1945), I, 18.

people, even to stimulate their easily aroused passions. During the years 1391 and 1392, there were fierce outbursts of anti-Semitism in nearly all parts of Spain except Castile. Thousands of Jews were massacred and their properties looted by the mob, while even greater numbers—reaching, it has been estimated, the appalling figure of 200,000—were given the choice of baptism or death. Those who submitted to baptism can hardly be blamed for saving their lives at the cost of what was not in a true sense apostasy but only compliance with an act that meant nothing to them in their hearts. They were known as the *conversos*, the New Christians, in contrast to the proud Old Christians, whose savagery had betrayed that the ancient pagan Goth still slumbered in their souls.

The external conformity of the New Christians did not bring them great relief, nor did it contribute much to the unity of belief and practice that had become the main purpose of statesmanship under Ferdinand and Isabella. Of the unhappy *conversos* who went to Mass, often hearing sermons directed against themselves, some became genuine Christians but the majority continued to perform the rites of the Synagogue so dear to them. They were spied upon and often denounced; at times they even suffered death at the stake as apostates from the faith. Attendance at Synagogue services, still permitted to the upper-class and wealthy Jews, meant for the small man, when discovered, a speedy end to all his earthly troubles. Yet, the cobbler, the tailor, the peasant farmer, remained loyal to the Law and practiced it behind barred doors. They are also said to have carried on a certain amount of proselytizing among Catholics of their own class, whose grasp of the faith was often not much more solidly based than that of the New Christians themselves. Many old Catholics, however, developed a real hatred for the New Christians because of their secret practices—for which these same Catholics were responsible—and fastened upon their wretched victims the opprobrious name of *marranos*, swine. As often in history, and never more so than in our own terrible times, the Jews, simply because of their existence and refusal to deny their age-old traditions, were made the scapegoats of a nationalism that had gone sour and unchristian.

According to Pastor, historian of the popes, whose sympathy for Spain is not very conspicuous in his erudite volumes, the problem of the New Christians had reached such a state at the end of the fifteenth

century that the very survival of Catholic life was at stake.² He is supported in this view by the Austrian scholar, Baumgarten, who wrote that "if matters had been allowed to proceed in the religious sphere [of Spain] as they had shaped themselves since the fourteenth century, a kind of Islamism, by an indirect route through some sort of syncretism, would have been the inevitable result."³ True, the powerful Dominican preacher St. Vincent Ferrer had converted many Jewish people, notably Rabbi Paul of Burgos who died Bishop of Carthagenia in 1435. It is also said that St. Vincent went to Granada at the invitation of its Moslem ruler, Mohammed Aben Balva, and there converted 8,000 Moors. But such efforts were merely marginal, hardly touching the immovability of the Jewish and Moorish population. The forced converts, on the other hand, formed a separate problem because of their number and clandestine practices.

On their account, the old, medieval Inquisition Pope Gregory IX had set up to combat the anarchical Albigensian heresy was revived in the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella. Actually, the tribunal established in 1478 was quite different from the medieval institution. "The Catholic Kings" had sought and obtained the sanction of Pope Sixtus IV, but that Renaissance Pontiff of humble birth was soon at odds with the powerful and determined Spanish monarchs who sought to dominate the operation, themselves naming the inquisitors, paying them and dismissing them as they thought fit—in fact, making the Inquisition a branch of their own judiciary. The Pope tried to keep a semblance of control over the new institution but eventually succumbed to the threats and hectoring of Ferdinand. He did protest, however, against the illegality and cruelty of the inquisitors of Seville in 1481 and insisted on appointing a man of his own choice, to whose judgment the incriminated New Christians might appeal.⁴

2. See Ludwig von Pastor, *History of the Popes*, ed. Frederick I. Antrobus (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1910), IV, 398.

3. Paul M. Baumgarten, *Henry Charles Lea's Historical Writings: A Critical Inquiry into their Method and Merit* (New York: Wagner, 1909), p. 89.

4. Bernardino Llorca's *La Inquisición en España* (Madrid, 1954), is a good and balanced account of the tribunal, though the author seems to accept as truth the story of a ritual murder supposed to have been committed by Jews at Sepúlveda in 1468. No such story has ever yet been proved, be it in Spain, England, or anywhere else, to the satisfaction of an unbiased historian. It is, of course, quite possible that Christian children have been murdered by Jewish maniacs, just as children have been murdered by Gentile maniacs, but no tittle of real evidence has ever been produced to show that the use of Christian blood formed any part of Jewish

On March 31, 1492, shortly after the conquest of Granada, the Spanish monarchs issued a decree expelling all public, or confessional, Jews from Spanish soil where they had lived for nearly a thousand years. Andrés Bernáldez, a chronicler of the time, put the total between 35,000 and 36,000 families, a formidable number and a woeful blot on the name of "the Catholic Kings." Those expelled, known as the Sephardic Jews, settled after much tribulation in North Africa, Italy, Turkey, the Levant, and Holland, where they restored their lives and fortunes. Only the baptized Jews, the *marranos*, remained. Partly through the ruthless measures of the Inquisition and, perhaps even more, through the irenic efforts of many priests and lay people, their faith had become, three generations later, as deep as that of anyone in Spain. Nevertheless, the old prejudice of the Visigothic majority not only remained but grew in intensity. Even if one's great-great-grandfather had been a convert from Judaism, one was still a *converso*. It was no longer a question of pure faith but of pure blood.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the insistence upon *limpia*

ritual. Unfortunately, medieval Christians believed that it did, with terrible consequences for innocent Jews. The late eminent scholar, Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., trenchantly dealt with the whole question in *The Month* of June 1898 and November 1913.

(The lack of historic evidence mentioned by the author has its complement in the theological improbability of what has euphemistically been called "the Jewish blood ritual." The Old Testament clearly forbids the consumption of animal blood and meat from which blood is not fully drawn. "Flesh with its life—that is, its blood—you shall not eat." [Gen 9:4. See also Lev 3:17; 7:26; 19:26; Deut 12:16, 23; 15:23; 17:10, and others.] God chose blood as a means of atonement; it must, therefore, serve no other purpose. Though drinking of human blood is not explicitly proscribed, it is so implicitly. If the partaking of animal blood is not permitted because of the animal sacrifices ordained in the Ancient Dispensation, the use of human blood can hardly be part of a worship, for which the sacrifice of a child is a profanation of God's name deserving the death penalty [see Lev 18:21; 20:2-3], an "abomination that the Lord detests" [Deut 12:31].

In many ways, later rabbinical legislation is stricter or, rather, more specific than Scripture. For instance, while blood in one's mouth may be swallowed, blood found on a loaf of bread must first be scraped away before the loaf may be eaten. [See Ker. 21b; cf. *B. Talmud, Kerithoth*, p. 163.] There is also the frequently pronounced principle that a dead body and whatever pertains to it may not be used to anyone's benefit. [See 'A.Z. 29b, 'Ar. 7a-b, San. 47b, Nid. 55a; cf. *B. Talmud, 'Abodah Zarah*, p. 147, 'Arakim, pp. 36-39, *Sanhedrin*, p. 317, *Niddah*, pp. 382-384.] Hence, an act of ritual murder—the use of the blood of a Christian child for the baking of unleavened bread or the drinking of such blood—would violate not only the natural law but also specific precepts of the Jewish tradition. It would repudiate the Jewish way of life, indeed, pervert Jewish worship into the service of Moloch. The popes have repeatedly denounced the injustice of the charge. [Editor.]

sangre had developed to such a degree that a Jewish or Moorish ancestor, no matter how far back in one's family tree, precluded a man from public office or required his resignation if he already held one, as New Christians often did. In 1525, the Franciscan Observants requested and obtained permission from Pope Clement VII to refuse applicants of Jewish descent or those who had been examined by the Inquisition. Other orders were quick to follow suit until "the question of the *limpieza* . . . became a veritable plague to the country, affecting destructively all Civil and State conditions."⁵ In 1540, however, there appeared on the Spanish scene the unique phenomenon of the Society of Jesus.

II

WHEN Ignatius of Loyola arrived at the University of Alcalá in the spring of 1526, hoping to improve his sadly neglected education, he soon fell under the suspicious eye of the local ecclesiastical authorities. They were wary of his unconventional dress—a long robe of sack-cloth—and of his practice of gathering about him small groups of simple folk—tradesmen, working women, and young girls—so that he might teach them simple methods of prayer. The questions put to him by the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Toledo were decidedly tendentious: Did he keep the Sabbath? Was he not, in fact, one of those pestilent New Christians proselytizing for the Law of Moses? Ignatius answered with a certain pride: "I employ Saturdays in devotion to our Lady, and I know of no other observances. Moreover, in my country there are no Jews."⁶ The country to which he referred was Guipúzcoa, the smallest of the Basque provinces in the far north of Spain. Its mountainous and unproductive land had not attracted Jews; not even the traces of a synagogue have been found within its confines. As far as can be ascertained, Ignatius was of pure Basque descent and therefore without a drop of Jewish or Moorish blood. In view of this, Baumgarten expressed amazement at discovering that the founder of the Jesuits was "an almost fanatical Jew-lover."⁷

5. Baumgarten, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

6. *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu* (subsequently shortened to *MHSJ*), *Fontes narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola* (Rome, 1951), I, 174.

7. Baumgarten, *Neue Kunde von alten Bibeln* (Krumbach, 1922), p. 391.

At Alcalá, Ignatius may have been somewhat supercilious about the *conversos*; they had just been forbidden by a new law of Guipúzcoa's junta to enter the province. He had been born less than a year before the expulsion of the confessional Jews in 1492, and he had spent the best part of his youth at Arévalo in old Castile, where feeling against the New Christians was strong. Quite naturally, he at first shared the prejudice of the majority of Spaniards, but he shed it completely as he grew in spiritual stature.

Pedro Ribadeneyra, his intimate disciple and later his biographer, tells a story testifying to the firmness of Ignatius's conviction. In 1547, when the question of *limpieza* had developed into a feverish heat, Juan Martínez Siliceo, the Archbishop of Toledo, published a statute requiring the members of his chapter, and all other priests subject to the Primatial See, to provide proof for the "purity" of their blood.

One day, many of us were dining together. A statement was made that caused Ignatius to say he would count it a special favor of our Lord were he of Jewish lineage. He gave this reason: "What wonder! That a man can be related by blood to Christ our Lord and to our Lady, the glorious Virgin Mary!" He spoke these words with such an expression and an emotion so deep that tears sprang to his eyes. This impressed everyone profoundly.

In connection with this incident I shall relate what Pedro de Zárata, a Basque from the town of Bermeo and a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, very friendly to the Society and an intimate of our Father, told me. On hearing our Father make the same statement Pedro crossed himself; exclaiming "Judío!" he spat on the ground contemptuously. Our Father took him up. "Very well, Señor Pedro de Zárata, let us be reasonable. Hear what I have to say." And then he gave the Knight so many good arguments for his view that he persuaded Pedro to wish, too, that he had been of Jewish blood.⁸

Two actions taken by St. Ignatius show that his feelings for the Jewish people were not pious sentimentality but a strong practical conviction. First, his attitude toward the many statutes regarding *limpieza*, especially those of Archbishop Siliceo, was one of complete and serene detachment. Other religious orders had accepted them and had ruled against the admission of candidates, no matter how suitable, if they were unable to prove that there was no "taint" of Jewish

8. MHSJ, *Monumenta Ignatiana* (series quarta; Madrid, 1904), I, 398-399.

blood in their ancestry. When writing the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus at the very apogee of the movement for *limpieza*, Ignatius ignored the question, except in one brief reference that had no bearing on the acceptance or rejection of a candidate by the Society. In the *Examen* prefixed to the *Constitutions*, various impediments are listed, such as apostasy, the commission of murder, a note of public infamy for criminal activities, that would preclude applicants from admission to the new community; however, no mention is made of New Christians, though that appellation automatically branded a man in Spain and Portugal with a note of infamy. Only in the third chapter of the *Examen* is it ruled that a candidate be asked if he comes from Old or New Christian stock; but the question was to obtain information, not to imply an impediment. The candidate was also asked whether or not he was of legitimate birth and whether or not his parents were dependent on him for sustenance. Alfonso Salmeron, youngest of the ten Jesuits then in the world, objected even to the one mild reference to *limpieza* when Ignatius submitted his draft.⁹

The Saint revised the *Constitutions* until the end of his life but held out serenely against attempts even by the King of Spain and Ruy Gomez, his all-powerful minister and a friend of the Jesuits, to persuade him to ban New Christians from the Society. Among the most notable *conversos* received by Ignatius himself was a man who fully merited the title of New Christian, for "he went to the baptismal font on his own feet." As a Jesuit, he bore the name of John Baptist Romano; his holiness and zeal, as well as the mission he undertook for the Holy See in the East, earned him the esteem of many.

The second way by which St. Ignatius showed his affection for the Jewish people was his Pauline eagerness to bring them to the knowledge of Christ. From the beginning of his work in Rome, when he and his infant Society were yet hardly known, the apostolate to the Jews was one of the projects dearest to his heart. For his own use and that of his companions, he had been given a tiny church, Santa

9. See MHSJ, *Constitutiones Societatis Jesu* (Rome, 1934), I, 391. Salmeron like Ribadeneyra was a native of Toledo and certainly of Old Christian stock. But he had been an intimate friend of Laynez since their university days at Alcalá and Paris, and it may have been on Laynez's account that he wished the single reference to *limpieza* to be omitted. But Ignatius let it stand, purely with a view to the better guidance and help of the many so-called *conversos* whom he freely admitted into the Society's ranks.

Maria della Strada, on the site of which the mighty Gesù now stands. There, in the summer of 1541, a most unusual ceremony took place. Ignatius himself tells the story in a joyful letter to his first disciple, Pierre Favre.

Moved by the grace of God, a young Roman Jew, handsome and well-off, decided to become a Christian. But, only a few days later, he fell in with a *publicana meretriz* and succumbed to her wiles. After some weeks during which he learned to love the woman in spite of her degradation, she was arrested, for liaisons of this kind between Christians and Jews were against the law. The young man went into hiding, but "by the goodness of God who governs all things," Ignatius discovered his whereabouts and brought him to Santa Maria. He also obtained the release of the woman and placed her in the house of a friend, where he could see her frequently in order to help her make a good confession and reform her life.

To the delight of St. Ignatius, the Jewish catechumen expressed the desire to marry the lady, and she to have him for her husband. Ignatius arranged that Doña Margarita of Austria, daughter of Emperor Charles V, and other members of the nobility as well as several bishops be present at the baptism of his protégé and at the marriage which took place immediately afterwards. He appointed his great and well-loved disciple, Diego Laynez—the New Christian who soon afterwards won fame at the Council of Trent—as preacher at the unique ceremony and Alfonso Salmeron to officiate at the baptism and the marriage. Ignatius himself said the nuptial Mass, and certainly, there was no happier man in Rome that Sunday.¹⁰

This incident was a mere feather in the wind that blew the sails of St. Ignatius. Pope Paul III, reigning at the time, showed great interest in the Jews of Rome and of the papal states so that a man as little inclined to anti-Semitism as Cardinal Sadoletto protested that "no Christian in any pontificate was ever showered with so many privileges, favors, and prerogatives as have been the Jews by Paul III in the last few years."¹¹ It was this Pope that St. Ignatius petitioned

10. See *MHSJ, Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Epistolae et Instructiones* (Madrid, 1903-10), I, 181-184. That the welfare of his catechumens occupied St. Ignatius's mind time and again is evident by the brief letter immediately following the one referred to. In it, he asks a friend for eight *scudi* to buy a suit of clothes for a poor Jewish catechumen who lived in the house.

11. As cited by Tacchi Venturi, *Storia della Campagna di Gesù in Italia* (Rome, 1951), II, 2, p. 151. The excerpt is from a letter of Sadoletto dated June 29, 1539.

to issue a brief, again condemning a custom that had persisted since the Middle Ages, whereby converts from Judaism were constrained to surrender all their property to public treasuries, in token of a complete break with their past. This unchristian requirement had been condemned as a detestable abuse by Pope Nicholas III in 1278, and again by John XXII in 1320 as absurd and contrary to justice and reason. Yet it persisted until the sixteenth century, even in the papal states. Paul III's brief, *Cupientes Judaeos*, issued on March 21, 1542, at last put an end to the practice. He ruled that Jews who desired to become Christians despite the opposition of their parents must be allowed to have and keep the inheritance that would have fallen to them in the ordinary course of events.¹²

The number of Jews wishing to become Christians increased so greatly that Ignatius was no longer able to accommodate them in the small, uncomfortable house adjoining Santa Maria della Strada. With the help of Doña Margarita and the Duchess of Castro, mother of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, he obtained two other houses for his catechumens, one for men and another for women. Writing to St. Francis Xavier in 1543, he described the progress of the new work: The Pope had issued a bull commending it, alms had poured in for its support, and a little church, San Giovanni del Mercato, was assigned to the new foundation.

There, on Low Sunday of 1544, before a packed congregation, the Bishop of Brescia administered baptism to two women and three men—one of whom was a learned rabbi. Between April and July of the same year, seven adults were prepared for the sacrament; five were Jews and two were Moslems. At the end of that year, the number of men and women baptized from the Casa dei Catechumeni approached two score.¹³

12. Pedro Ribadeneyra states expressly in his famous *Vida* that it was St. Ignatius who procured *Cupientes Judaeos* from the Pope. (See *Historias de la Contrarreforma*, ed. Eusebio Rey, S.J., Madrid, 1945, p. 179.) The editor of this volume, which contains the "Life of St. Ignatius" and several other works by Ribadeneyra, has himself written an article on "San Ignacio de Loyola y el problema de los 'cristianos nuevos,'" *Razón y Fe* (Jan.-Feb. 1956), pp. 173-204, to which the present modest essay is much indebted.

13. See Venturi, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-157. By the time of St. Ignatius's death in 1556 there were 208 men and women under instruction at the Casa dei Catechumeni. A jarring note in the history of the Casa was the order of Pope Julius III that the synagogues in the papal states should help support it, a measure we cannot but call unfair. Neither can we concur with the ukase of Pope Gregory XIII in 1584, requiring a third of the Jews of Rome to attend sermons preached for their

III

TO FILL out this simple sketch, it seems appropriate to examine in greater detail the difficulties St. Ignatius encountered because of his attitude toward the New Christians. The chief gainsayer among his own sons was Antonio Araoz, nephew of his sister-in-law and a fine preacher whom he had appointed provincial of the Jesuits in Spain. Father Araoz, also a Guipúzcoan, was proud of his "untainted" blood and though not liked by his brethren they bore with him because of his relationship with their beloved father. His polished manners and gift for oratory won him entrance to court circles where he enjoyed the friendship of Ruy Gomez de Silva, Count of Eboli, a favorite of King Philip and an ardent believer in *limpieza*. A long letter that Araoz addressed to Ignatius from Valencia on December 1, 1545, gives reasons for a prolonged stay at the court of Philip II, but ends with these significant lines:

Padre, until the Society is somewhat better known and established in Castile, it would seem highly important to think over the matter of accepting New Christians, as that alone is now, in the opinion of many, poison. The inquisitors here are my very good friends, not just spiritually, as one of them hails from Guipúzcoa and the other is acquainted with my father. They are losing the suspicions they entertained through lack of information.¹⁴

The following year, he referred again to the matter of *limpieza*, and he continued to press it, not only during the remaining years of St. Ignatius's life but with Laynez, St. Ignatius's successor as general, whose election had displeased the Spanish court because of his Jewish blood. Ribadeneyra went so far as to say that Araoz raised *grandes turbulencias* and even contemplated abandoning the Society of Jesus for a religious order not "contaminated" by New Christians if he could not get the ruling of St. Ignatius changed.

To be fair to Antonio Araoz, who shared the common prejudice of most Spaniards, one must remember that he was under continuous

benefit each Saturday at specified churches, even though Protestant princes exercised the same "right" and even though Catholics in England and Ireland, for instance, were compelled to attend Anglican services and support the established church for an even longer period.

14. MHSJ, *Epistolae Mixtae* (Madrid, 1898-99), I, 241.

heavy pressure from his friends at court to bombard St. Ignatius. Perhaps Ribadeneyra, so fierce on the other side, exaggerated these interventions, for when Araoz wrote in November 1549 to say that there was a schism among devoted friends of the Society over the question of accepting men of Jewish extraction into its ranks, he was stating the simple truth.¹⁵ On the one hand, St. Francis Borgia, who was an outstanding Spanish grandee and intimate friend of Charles V, stoutly opposed discrimination between New Christians and Old, while Archbishop Siliceo of Toledo, a man of humble origins, was adamant in maintaining the distinction. He hated the Jesuits because they would not abide by it. Having set up a modest mission in Alcalá under the Archbishop's jurisdiction, they were persecuted unmercifully; the mission was deprived of its faculties, the priests forbidden to preach and threatened with excommunication.

The rector, Father Villanueva, explained the situation to St. Ignatius in a letter written on November 15, 1551. He and another Jesuit, Miguel Torres, a man of great distinction, had called upon the Archbishop, who suspected Villanueva of being a New Christian and therefore would speak only to Torres. The Archbishop told Torres he was not an enemy of the Society, except on this one point, and if it accepted his statute on *limpieza*, it would have no greater friend than himself. Villanueva's letter continued:

If we compromise with the Archbishop, I believe we shall lose more in other places than we shall gain in his Archdiocese. Moreover, we shall put a big obstacle in the way of people who wish to obtain our help in the confessional and by the *Spiritual Exercises*. If we make distinctions, the people will stay away, and this at the present time when there are mighty few grandees in Castile who can boast of *limpia sangre*. It is a great pity that the authorities should want to exclude from these parts the *pobrecitos*, these poor little ones whom they call New Christians. I wish I had the strength and health to be able to constitute myself their attorney, especially as they are generally more virtuous than the Old Christians or the *hidalgos*.¹⁶

St. Ignatius answered this letter, and one from Araoz advocating a compromise, in no uncertain terms, through his secretary Juan Polanco:

15. See *ibid.*, II, 314.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 625-626.

Our Father has been to see the Pope and has told him and some of the principal cardinals, usually favorable to the Archbishop, about his procedures. They are now all on our side. It is extraordinary the fame which that Prelate enjoys here in Rome on account of his pre-eminence in Spain, and so the more disturbing to hear of his actions. May God give him the grace to reform himself first, in order that, as he ambitions, he may be able to reform the Church, or help with its reform. . . . The first thing you must try to secure is your right to preach and to hear confessions, so that the service of God may not be suspended. As for coming to terms with the Archbishop and accepting his statute of *limpieza*, thus adapting our constitutions to his, it is not to be thought of. Let him look to his own charge and that will give him quite enough to do.¹⁷

The Papal Nuncio to Spain at that time was Cardinal Giovanni Poggio. At first, he was inclined to temporize with the headstrong Archbishop of Toledo; he even persuaded Father Villanueva—against the latter's better judgment—to reject some "virtuous and well-born candidates because they had a few drops of Jewish blood." St. Ignatius would not hear of such an accommodation and, after a careful inquiry into the state of affairs at Alcalá, the Nuncio came around to his view. Cardinal Poggio went to the Archbishop and told him with great earnestness that it would please the Pope if he desisted from his campaign against the Jesuits. The Archbishop replied angrily that he wished to be left alone to govern his sheep as he thought best. The Cardinal retorted hotly: "You are to leave the Jesuits, who are not your sheep, alone if you do not want to be sent a prisoner to Rome."

This was no idle threat. The Nuncio had not only the Pope behind him but the Spanish King as well, and the Archbishop gave way before such a powerful combination. He withdrew his edicts against the Alcalá mission and for the rest of his life carried on no more than a "cold war" against the Jesuits. St. Ignatius was so relieved by the restoration of peace that he wrote a letter of deep thanks to the Archbishop for canceling his edicts. In the same letter he promised that his sons in the Archdiocese of Toledo would not use the faculties, which like all religious communities they held, under the canon law of the time, directly from the Holy See, "except in so far as it shall seem

17. *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola* (Madrid, 1877), III, 13-21.

good to your Highness, for the relief of even the smallest particle of the heavy load God our Lord has imposed upon you."

The Saint went even further and, for the first and only time, relaxed his opposition to the myth of *limpieza*, though only in so far as it concerned Spain. "I am writing to our men in Spain," he continued, "instructing them that neither in Alcalá nor in any other part of the Kingdom are they to accept any person for our Society who is unacceptable to your Most Reverend Highness." On the same day, June 1, 1552, he wrote to Father Villanueva, giving strict orders that his men were not to preach, administer the sacraments, or engage in any other pastoral activity, "except in conformity with the mind of his Highness the Archbishop." Finally, no one was to be received into the Society throughout Spain against the Archbishop's wishes.¹⁸

The olive branch, however, did not greatly move the flinty-minded prelate—as flinty by nature as by name¹⁹—for though he maintained an icy, surface politeness, he continued to thwart the Alcalá Jesuits to the end of his life. He had not obtained what he wanted most of all: that Ignatius write into his *Constitutions* a clause that barred from the Society of Jesus all candidates with the slightest trace of Jewish blood, even if they had been Catholic for a thousand years.

Two letters written to Spain slightly more than a year before Ignatius's death indicate that the founder of the Jesuits had not actually wavered in his attitude toward *limpieza*, but had merely made a temporary concession to what he called the *humor español*. The first, dated May 29, 1555, was addressed to St. Francis Borgia, then a Jesuit priest and *comisario*, general agent for the Society in Spain, who had asked for instructions. Polanco wrote on behalf of the ailing founder:

As for that youth of good parts whose father is a convert Moslem, he can be accepted, as can all other similar cases, no matter from what religion their ancestors turned to Christianity, or even if they are themselves immediate converts. This is the general practice of the Society and its *Constitutions*. As our aim and endeavor is edification and the service of God our Lord, a discreet charity will be able to judge what is best in particular cases. If it would be unwise to receive such candidates in Seville or Cordoba or similar places, they might well be sent to other parts of

18. See *ibid.*, pp. 68–75.

19. The Latin *silex*, *silicis*, means flint stone.

the country where nothing would be known against them to cause disedification. However, if, as you say, it would be no good to direct them to other places in Spain, let them come to Italy if they are good subjects, since here their origins will be unknown and people, in any case, do not trouble their heads about such things.

The second letter, dated June 13, 1555, went to Father Antonio de Cordoba, also a Spanish nobleman; it is even more emphatic:

As for our Father abolishing the distinction between New and Old Christians in the Society, he has already done so. Here in Rome, all are received without discrimination if they are good and suitable subjects for our Institute. As the affairs of our Society are still in an early and precarious state in Spain, it is necessary to be cautious in order to avoid such opposition as would hinder foundations and the free practice of the service of God. For this reason, our conviction ought not to be declared as openly as we hold it in our hearts, namely, that there is no partiality to persons among us nor any consideration of their racial origins. The intention of our Father is that you should not desist from receiving any suitable candidate because he happens to be of Moorish or Jewish descent. If you have reason to fear that the acceptance of such a person in any particular place might cause disedification, then move him somewhere else, or should nowhere in Spain be safe from wagging heads, send him to us in Italy where there are no such discriminatory obstacles, which are surely unworthy of such fine and sensible Christians as are the Spaniards.²⁰

Polanco wrote a final letter on the matter to Pedro de Zárate on October 29 of the same year, nine months before the Saint died. Zárate had written to Ignatius that the powerful Count of Eboli had expressed his displeasure with the Society of Jesus because it accepted, or took back into its ranks, many New Christians who had been rejected to placate Archbishop Siliceo. The Count, he felt, should be given full and accurate information about the Society's attitude, which was as follows:

Our Society neither can nor ought to exclude all applicants of that kind. . . . As it would not befit our Society to accept candidates indiscriminately, even less would it become it to exclude one or the other group of men well-suited to the service of God in its ranks. Hence the merits of each candidate are carefully considered, circumstances of place are also

20. *MHSJ, Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Epistolae et Instructiones*, IX, 87, 149-150.

taken into account. Indeed, no one is received whose entrance might result in disedification. But tell the Prince [Gomez] that there are men of Jewish and Moorish extraction in the Society who yield in no respect to Old Christians, to the *hidalgos* or *caballeros*, as good religious and as promoters of the general welfare. If he knew this as well as we do, he would, I have not the slightest doubt, be entirely of our opinion.²¹

These were the last words of St. Ignatius on this burning question. In his unruly youth, he had dreamed of martial glory and had proved himself more than ready to die on the last redoubt in the service of his king. But when the King of heaven took over, He put His raw recruit through a period of training so severe as few, even of the great saints, were called upon to endure. The relentless pressure of God, working on his natural temperament and powerful will, made Ignatius of Loyola into a new type of Spaniard, one above the narrowness and prejudices of nationalism, one who saw in every human face the clouded features of Jesus, his Lord, who even yearned, as was said of him, to draw every heart into his own. On so high an altitude, lit by the effulgence of the Holy Trinity, where Ignatius habitually lived, there could be no longer Jew or Greek, but all were one in Christ Jesus (see Gal 3:28). His *Constitutions* are the perfect reflection of his mind and heart, timeless in their wisdom and open to the future.

Sadly enough, years after St. Ignatius's death, Araoz and those who thought like him won a victory over the good judgment and the magnanimity of their founder. Ribandeneyra was still alive, though an old man, to fight a gallant rear guard battle for the true spirit of the Society. He lost, but in the long run, the very long run, the Ignatian spirit prevailed.

Cornelia and Irving Süssman

THE FACE OF PASTERNAK

I AM tempted to say that art does not equal itself, does not mean itself alone, but that it means tangibly something beyond itself. In this way we call art symbolic in essence. If I believe an author is not too great in his natural endowments, or if I do not discover in his works this immense spiritual quality, this sense of all-surpassing, overarching importance to life, he is as nothing to me however good the written page.¹

So Boris Pasternak declared in a letter to Eugene Kayden in 1958. When he died in his home at Peredelkino near Moscow on May 30, 1960, he had received from the world of letters, outside his native land, full recognition as an artist of "immense spiritual quality."

In the world of letters, the quality regarded as immensely spiritual has a variety of meanings. One might study Boris Pasternak's background, search out the biographical facts of his life, in order to discover wherein lay his immense spiritual quality. He was born in Odessa in 1890 of well-to-do Jewish parents. His father, Leonid, was a famous painter; his mother, Rosa, a concert pianist. Through them, he was exposed to the open world of art beyond the ghetto, to men like Tolstoy and Rilke, both of whom his parents knew personally. Greek Orthodox Christianity drew him powerfully, but he grew up in a turbulent era in which orthodox religion was being assailed by a new religion of grandiose revolutionary illusions.

In truth, external biographical sketches cannot evoke for us the face of the person, Boris Pasternak—this person whose voice was destined to shatter the conspiracy of silence that surrounded his world. He was an artist speaking out suddenly in the midst of darkness and fear, with a lyric clarity almost as touching as the voice of a bird breaking through the gloom of a long murky night. It was through art, not

1. From the introduction to *Boris Pasternak: Poems*, trans. Eugene M. Kayden (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), p. viii.

polemic, through a courageous work of art, that his voice broke the barrier of silence. It is to his art, then, that we must look for the lineaments of Boris Pasternak. "Art," he said, "is not simply a description of life, but a setting forth of the uniqueness of being."²

Not for biographical details, then, not for the prying-out of parallels—whether this or that "fact" actually happened to Boris Pasternak, the man, or only to Zhivago, the character—but for something deeper, more intimate, must the novel *Doctor Zhivago*³ be searched: for the uniqueness of man's being as understood by Boris Pasternak.

"The face of man can preserve itself as the image of God only when it is linked by faith with the original Divine Image in which it was created. As soon as man breaks his tie with God, the face loses the quality of the image: it falls apart," writes Max Picard in *The Flight from God*.⁴ The face of Boris Pasternak, as mirrored in his art, what kind of face is it? Is it a face in which the divine Image is preserved, the image of Love? Is this its immense spiritual quality or has it fallen apart?

Pasternak himself told us where to look for his face. "What am I," he wrote to Eugene Kayden, "without the novel, and what have you to write about me without drawing upon that work, its terms and revelations?"⁵ Thus we must look at his book.

TIME

THE story of *Doctor Zhivago* opens with a funeral. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the earth and everything that dwells therein" (Ps 23:1), chants the priest as he makes the sign of the cross over the dead mother of a weeping ten-year-old boy (p. 3). When the story closes, the boy, grown up, grown old before his time, lies dead of a heart attack, his body awaiting cremation in a civil ceremony. "Only the flowers compensated for the absence of the ritual and the chant. . . . [They] seemed to take over the function of the Office of the Dead." "Perhaps," the author reflects, "the riddles of life

2. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

3. Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (New York: Pantheon, 1958).

4. Max Picard, *The Flight From God*, trans. Marianne Kuschnitzky and J. M. Cameron (Chicago: Regnery, 1951), p. 160.

5. *Boris Pasternak: Poems*, p. vii.

that so puzzle us are contained in the green of the earth, among the trees and the flowers of graveyards. Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus risen from the grave, 'supposing Him to be the gardener' (p. 493).

Lara, the dead man's mistress, grieves that he does not have a church funeral: "He would have deserved all that, he would have justified and given meaning to 'the lament over the grave which is the hymn of Alleluiah.'" Leaning over the coffin, she makes "three sweeping signs of the cross over the body . . ." (p. 500). For Lara, there will be no one to make this act of charity. After the funeral she goes into the street and is never seen again. "She vanished without a trace," we are told, "and probably died somewhere, forgotten as a nameless number on a list that afterwards got mislaid, in one of the innumerable mixed or women's concentration camps in the north" (p. 503).

Between these two moments—the moment when the ten-year-old boy experienced death for the first time and his uncle "spoke to him of Christ and tried to comfort him" (p. 5), and the moment when the grown man lay dead, his body awaiting cremation and a civil ceremony—stretches an extraordinary story of hours and days, weeks and months, years and decades, of the human body and soul in travail, of a society torn down and being rebuilt, of men of "principle" ruthlessly determined to reshape the planet, and of one single man believing that "people must be drawn to good by goodness" (p. 261); that life exists in its own right, and not as an illustration for a superior policy; above all, that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Before the reader's eyes there unfolds the spectacle of a world made by God and ruined by men. The terrible scenes of derailed trains; of burned villages where only a few houses still stand, empty, uninhabited, "piles of charred rubble with black chimneys rising out of them" (p. 468); of orphaned fields, plague-infested with mice, looking as if they had been put "under a curse" (p. 467); of cities in the process of demolition; of human lives herded irresponsibly from one place to another; of families destroyed, and individuals disintegrated—all this, set against the tremendous and poignant beauty of forest and mountain, snow and sky, wild bird and wild beast, heart-breaking reminders of a world created in harmony, makes a contrast that lives in the aroused mind long after the reader has finished the book.

The idealists, the dreamers of socialism and brotherhood, thought they were destroying the "world of ignominy and fraud" in the 1905 revolution. Tiverzin, the railway worker, lived for "the time when everything on earth would be as rational and harmonious as it was now inside his feverish head" (p. 31). The girl Lara, who would grow up to die "forgotten as a nameless number on a list," hears the gunfire of that first revolution and thinks: "The boys are shooting" (p. 51). Later, when the real revolution comes in 1917, she realizes: "You couldn't say, 'The boys are shooting' this time. The children had all grown up . . ." (p. 128). The children had grown up, their revolution was "not the idealized intellectuals' revolution of 1905, but this new upheaval, today's, born of the war, bloody, ruthless, elemental, the soldiers' revolution led by those professional revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks" (pp. 160-161).

The Train of History, as Lenin and the Bolsheviks symbolized their movement, was on its way. These men conceived of society as a train that could be seized by a new set of engineers and driven full steam ahead to the glorious destination of the new order. The Train of History was to become a familiar phrase everywhere. In the 30s one heard it in America. You could not jump off the Train of History, men were told. You had to ride it out to its destination. To abandon it was, at best to be left behind, at worst to be crushed beneath its roaring wheels. The anathema pronounced against all those who, like Silone and Malraux, had deserted the Communist cause was that they had jumped off the Train of History.

In his beautifully delineated novel, Pasternak uses the Bolshevik metaphor with intense poetic power. The reader experiences what the ride in the Train of History meant, experiences what it meant to jump off that train, to be left behind and, even though not crushed beneath its wheels, to die of exhaustion in heart and body.

In the novel there must be many perspectives or it is not a work of art.⁶ There is the perspective of immediate human life, and arching

6. Something should be said about the careful art that has gone into the structure of this novel. Pasternak, expressing his intention as a novelist in his letter to Eugene Kayden, wrote: "You say I am 'first and last a poet, a lyric poet.' Is it really so? And should I feel proud of being just that? And do you realize the meaning of my being no more than that, whereas it hurts me to feel that I have not had the ability to express in greater fullness the whole of poetry and life in their complete unity? But what am I without the novel, and what have you to write about me without drawing upon that work, its terms and revelations?" (*Ibid.*) That Pasternak does

over and around the immediacy of life are the perspectives of allegory. In *Doctor Zhivago* many allegories open out of the immediate daily lives of the people. There are the allegories of snow and spring, death and resurrection; the allegories of forest and city, of the wolves and the candle burning in the window.

The allegory of the train opens the book. The first chapter is called "The Five-o'clock Express," for from the five o'clock express the father of the ten-year-old boy, the millionaire Zhivago, leaps to his death in despair because he cannot find the answers to the problems of his life. But this is only a "little" train, "a neat little yellow and blue train, tiny in the distance" (p. 11). At the height of the novel, the little yellow and blue train, from which a millionaire of the old order leaped to his death, seems indeed innocent compared to the iron monsters moving or stalled on snow-covered rails. The Train of History. Where is it going? Will it reach its utopian goal? According to St. Thomas More, who invented the word "Utopia," the word signifies a pre-Christian "nowhere."

Immobilized and buried in the snow, [train after train] stretched almost uninterruptedly for miles on end. Some of them served as strongholds for armed bands of highwaymen or as hideouts for escaping criminals or political fugitives—the involuntary vagrants of those days—but most of them had become mortuaries and mass graves for the victims of the cold and of the typhus raging all along the line and mowing down whole villages (p. 378).

Around this horror of immobilized trains, mass graves, of travelers turning off the road at the sight of travelers, of strangers killing strangers "for fear of being killed" (p. 378), of ruined fields and ravaged towns, stand irrefragable reminders of God's creation.

Now and then there was a quiet, pale gray, dark rose evening, with birches, black and fine as script against the afterglow, and black streams faintly clouded over with gray ice flowing between steep white banks of

succeed to a remarkable degree in expressing "the whole of poetry and life in their complete unity" is most impressive from the structural standpoint, for only when careful attention is given to the structure of this novel does one become aware that the poems, gathered together rather ineptly as an appendix to the book, must have been intended as a vital part of the inner structure of the novel, performing a spiritual function with the most artistic delicacy within the very context of the story. Had the author had the freedom to work on the page proofs and galleys of his book, one can scarcely doubt that he would have righted the compositor's work.

snow blackened at the edges where the running water had eroded them (p. 379).

Over the broken world, God's sky flows ceaselessly, God's seasons take their accustomed course.

Awakening one night during the long trip to the Urals, Doctor Zhivago sees that the train is standing still, "the station bathed in the glassy dusk of a white night." The darkness is so still, so luminous that he is touched by the thought of how quiet and considerate everyone is for the sleeping passengers. But

the doctor was mistaken. There was the same din of shouting voices and stamping boots on this platform as on any other. But there was a waterfall near by. It widened the expanse of the white night by a breath of freshness and freedom; that was what had filled him with happiness in his sleep. Its incessant noise dominated all other sounds and gave an illusion of stillness (p. 234).

It is on this night that some of the labor conscripts, with whom car after car is filled, break free "like the water" (p. 238).

What is history? the doctor asks himself. When he was a child his uncle had told him that history as we know it "began with Christ, and that Christ's Gospel is its foundation" (p. 10). Time is Zhivago's religious preoccupation, his hope. His is "a happy feeling that all events took place not only on the earth, in which the dead are buried, but also in some other region which some called the Kingdom of God . . ." (p. 13).

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about *Doctor Zhivago* is the way time belongs to God in the narrative of this book; the events of the story are related not to the calendar of numbered days and months, but to the calendar marked by the life of Christ. The Saviour haunts this book. One is not told that a day is Wednesday, but that it is the Feast of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin or the Feast of the Assumption or Maundy Thursday or the seventh canonical hour.

It is time in the context of God's love, time as centered in the coming down of the Saviour, that Zhivago celebrates in the discussion of the Old Testament and the New. The enigma of the strange and sad destiny of the Jews troubles the people of this story. Lara asks why "these people who once liberated mankind from the yoke of idolatry, and so many of whom now devote themselves to its libera-

tion from injustice, should be so incapable of liberating themselves" from a loyalty she calls obsolete. She cannot understand why the Jews do not "dissolve among all the rest whose religion they have founded . . ." (p. 300).

Misha Gordon, Zhivago's friend, wants to shout to his people: "Come to your senses, stop. Don't hold on to your identity. Don't stick together, disperse. Be with all the rest. You are the first and best Christians in the world" (p. 123). Down the ages, the Jews have been characterized as a practical people, good at survival; yet how can a people that refuses to give up its identity even in the face of the cruelest extermination be called practical, good at survival? This steadfastness will never be loosed in the name of expediency, practicality, survival—evidently it is God's will that identity, particularly Jewish identity, be not jettisoned but fulfilled.

The relationship of the Old Covenant to the New contains the answer to Zhivago's question: What is history? When the Old came to an end, he says thoughtfully, something in the world changed: "Individual human life became the life story of God . . ." (p. 413). Time and history belong to God's love—all time relates to salvation, to the Saviour. "As it says in a liturgy of the Feast of the Annunciation, Adam tried to be like God and failed, but now God was made man so that Adam should be made God" (p. 413).

PRAYER

AS THE story is haunted by the memory of the Saviour, so it is haunted in a lower key, in counterpoint, by the memory of home and family. "I was looking out of the window in the train—I thought, what is there in the whole world worth more than a peaceful family life and work?" (p. 170). In a speech at a party, he cried: "During the revolution it will seem to you, as it seemed to us at the front, that life has stopped, that there is nothing personal left, that there is nothing going on in the world except killing and dying" (p. 182). This is almost midway in the book. Later, he writes in his notebook: "What happiness, to work from dawn to dusk for your family and for yourself, to build a roof over their heads . . . to feed them, to create your own world . . . in imitation of the Creator of the universe . . ." (p. 277). Real life, meaningful life, the goal of all quests,

the aim of all art, he had thought earlier is "homecoming, return to one's family, to oneself, to true existence" (p. 164).

Most moving is the atmosphere of prayer that suffuses this novel. Zhivago is a man of prayer. Sometimes the prayer is not "trued," but even when vague and ambiguous, when waveringly off key or sharply on key with exact purity, the sound is the voice of the human heart addressing God. One thinks of Auden's line: "Sin fractures the Vision, not the Fact"⁷—the vision in *Doctor Zhivago* is fractured by a shattered world. One is made aware that here is a writer, a man, who has had little chance to practice more than a personal, a hidden kind of prayer; certainly no outward practice could be possible in the catastrophic world of Doctor Zhivago, and just as certainly no help was obtainable from the outside. All one could learn of Christ—how to pray to Him, how to know Him—would have to be learned alone, from one's own intuitions, insights, memories: like the language of a foreign land learned from afar, from the dictionary and the memories of one's mother who spoke it, with no one to correct the strange mispronunciations of the words, the odd inversions of the clauses.

One receives the premonition that this stumbling, faltering, yearning, longing "way" will some day, God forbid, be the lot of thousands of Zhivagos. We may be those Zhivagos, deprived of all access to the sacraments, to religious truths, to the treasury of Christ's words. How many of us, then, might not fall silent, our prayer crushed out by the storm as a violent wind knocks the breath out of a man?

Yet here is a man in the very center of the blizzard, Doctor Zhivago, the creation of the writer Pasternak, who has not lost his breath but steadfastly continues to address God, not blaming, not despairing, but in utterly loving speech, like one who in the midst of destroying winds, has found the calm eye of the hurricane.

It goes back to Zhivago's youth, this habit of prayer. The boy of ten prays: "Angel of God, my holy guardian, keep me firmly on the path of truth and tell Mother I'm all right, she's not to worry. If there is a life after death, O Lord, receive Mother into Your heavenly mansions where the faces of the saints and of the just shine like stars" (pp. 11-12).

The young man fresh out of *Gymnasium* and university proclaims

7. From "For the Time Being, A Christmas Oratorio," *The Collected Poems of W. H. Auden* (New York: Random House, 1945), p. 426.

that his "reverence for the supreme powers of heaven and earth" (p. 87) is without religiosity, yet he perseveres in his habit of speaking continually to God. Now, he says, he speaks to "the supreme powers of heaven and earth" through art—art, which he calls the answer to the desolation of death. Distinctively Christian words are the garb of his art. Like a wedding garment, the Christian vocabulary clothes his thoughts, and realizing this, he declares: "All great, genuine art resembles and continues the Revelation of St. John" (p. 90).

In the beginning was the Word. One is suddenly reminded of the remarks of Elizabeth Langgässer in her novel, *The Quest*, which also depicts a terribly broken world, where she speaks of the end of the world as "a relapse into ghostly silence, dumbness, and fearful soundlessness, as its beginning had been the tireless speech of God."⁸

When returning home from the first world war, Doctor Zhivago, a mature man, looks out of the window as his train approaches the city and instant prayer leaps up in his heart—after three years of scenes of death and destruction, fire and ruin, he senses the passing of a nightmare, homecoming, reality. At this moment the train breaks out of the woods, a sloping field rises from a hollow, opposite the field a dark purple cloud covers half the sky, but sunbeams are breaking through and "the Church of Christ the Saviour showed over the rim of the hill" (p. 165; see also p. 473).

"Trued" or off-focus, the Christian phrase, the Christian symbol, above all the Christian sense of relationship of the creature to a Creator who cares for His creation, who came down from heaven to save it, whose tireless speech sustains His creation and keeps it from relapsing into fearful soundlessness—this sense of the Christian relationship and the response of the creature to that sense, not the blind howl of agony calling out from nothingness to nothingness, but the outpouring of loving trust and loving praise: This is the atmosphere of prayer that pervades Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*.

Older, broken, desperate, having sent away his beloved Lara because it seems the only way to save her life, the doctor stands at the window of the lodge and suddenly imagines that Lara has turned back. "O God, is it Thy will to give her back to me?" he cries (p. 450). At all times, in captivity of the body, in captivity of the soul, Zhivago refers to God's will. He is described by the author as a man who, even

8. Elizabeth Langgässer, *The Quest* (New York: Knopf, 1953), p. 120.

when "he cursed his luckless fate," at the same instant prayed to God (p. 444). In looking at the sleeping heads of Lara and her little daughter on their snow-white pillows, "the purity of their features, and of the clean linen and the clean rooms, and of the night, the snow, the stars, the moon, [surges] through his heart in a single wave of meaning, moving him to a joyful sense of the triumphant purity of being" (p. 437). And he whispers—this is on the very eve of his giving up forever these beings to whom he is bound by the most intense affections—"Lord! Lord! and all this is for me? Why hast Thou given me so much? Why hast Thou admitted me to Thy presence, allowed me to stray into Thy world, among Thy treasures, under Thy stars, and to the feet of my luckless, irrational, uncomplaining love?" (p. 437).

Earlier Lara tells him: "You and I are like Adam and Eve, the first two people on earth who at the beginning of the world had nothing to cover themselves with—and now at the end of it we are just as naked and homeless" (p. 403). Naked and homeless, stripped of everything, family, human love, reputation, work, Doctor Zhivago holds on to prayer. And in his poems one finds beautiful, almost awesome, expressions of thanksgiving from a man who has lost every worldly thing. Thanksgiving to the Creator who said: "Be!"—thus creating man and admitting him to His presence, allowing him to stray into His world, among His treasures, under His stars. Zhivago thanks God for everything, for the little houses on the street, the rain clouds, the lamps, the icon lights, the puddles, the white rift of sky; he could pick them up and kiss them. He thinks with joyful gratitude that it is possible for him to receive the dazzling God-made gift of beauty from the hands of the Creator. He relates all beauty to beingness, the God-made gift, and all beingness to joy. "Art always serves beauty, and beauty is delight in form, and form is the key to organic life, since no living thing can exist without it, so that every work of art, including tragedy, expresses the joy of existence" (p. 454).

And so one comes to the end of the book about Zhivago.

Like Cinderella's coach which turns into a pumpkin, the Train of History becomes a dilapidated trolley, stalled in the city. Zhivago, trying to push his way out, thinks of the problems in school arithmetic, on "how soon and in what order trains, starting at different times and going at different speeds, get to their destinations" (p. 490). But the

method of solving these problems escapes him. There is only one method of solving any problem of destination, after all. It is to be found in his poem "Magdalene":

*Oh, where would I now be,
My Master and my Saviour,
If eternity were not awaiting me . . . (p. 555).*

The Train of History and the ruined, wracked landscape are under the eye of God.

HOPE

WHEN the man who wrote *Doctor Zhivago* died, his coffin was lowered into the grave at Peredelkino. The Office of the Dead was not read over it, just as the Office of the Dead was not read over the coffin of the character he had created in his novel. Instead, a friend read Pasternak's poem, "Hamlet," a poem in which he says:

*If Thou be willing, Abba, Father,
Remove this cup from me.*

He goes on, at once, to add:

I cherish this, Thy rigorous conception.

And he closes with the words:

To live life to the end is not a childish task (p. 523).

What remains? The image of a human being, the face of a man, a book. It is a book pervaded with loving prayer, with the poetry of Christ's haunting presence, with the purity of the human soul, and with a most astonishing savor of chastity, of cleanness of heart in a story where the betrayal of marriage plays a major, almost symbolic part—all these come together in a final impression of a soul filled, not with anguish, terror, despair which one might expect, but with hope. The final impression of Pasternak's book is one of hope, of the Gospel's hope: "In the world you will have affliction," says Jesus, "but take courage, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

It is this beautiful, courageous, upward movement of hope that emerges when Boris Pasternak's novel is finished, breaking free like the waterfall out of the waste man has made of God's world.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. So the book opens. As it ends, God's love burns like a candle on a table where bread may be broken, a table near a window. The man in the storm may look up, may see the candle burning in the window, and from his mouth may come a cry of praise through the ghostly silence, as the blizzard sweeps the world from end to end.

The man looked up, broke the silence of his world, and the candle lit his face, the face of a unique being preserving the divine Image, the face of a man, Pasternak.

In the Lord's Keeping

*"O Lord!" he sighed in his sorrow,
"How perfect the works of Thy hand!
The beds and the walls, my passing
In death, the night in the land.*

*"I swallow a sedative capsule;
I weep in my desolate place.
O Father, my tears and my torments
Keep me from seeing Thy face!*

*"How sweet Thy light to my spirit,
At the end in my agony;
How sweet that my lot and being
Are Thy gift of life unto me.*

*"And, dying, I feel that Thy hands
Are ablaze, that I die in Thy grace,
That I rest, O Lord, in Thy keeping,
Like a priceless ring in a case."*

These are the last four stanzas of Pasternak's poem "In the Hospital" and are taken, with the kind permission of the publisher, from *Boris Pasternak: Poems*, trans. Eugene M. Kayden (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959, Copyright © by The University of Michigan 1959), p. 181.

A NOTE ON THE ART OF ERNST FUCHS

ERNST FUCHS is a painter of worlds within worlds. He himself tells us so in the brave attempt he makes below to explicate his paintings. His paintings themselves tell us as much again. They do so particularly in the fresh way he uses generally accepted religious themes, symbols, signs. He is never content to allow a familiar scene to carry its own weight. He almost always adds a measure of interiority that takes us far from the surface events of, say, the Resurrection or the Assumption, or the obvious iconography that we associate with the Archangel Michael or the crucified Christ. Michael's sword bursts into flame; his shield and his breastplate are heavily worked with precious metals and gems. But the great jewelry of the painting is to be found in the angel's fiery hair and rapt, recollected face; these are surely his greatest weapons in repelling the devils who conduct their affairs at the bottom of the painting. In the same way, Fuchs has surrounded Christ on the cross with a strange unearthly vegetation, which in the tradition of medieval symbols can be interpreted as signifying good or evil.

Fuchs's colors are an essential part of his translation of inner images into outer textures. He does extraordinary things with the red and blue palette, making gradations in tone sometimes so subtle that one must look three or four times to discover all the details of exteriority and interiority that he has locked within the colors. Such attention is not ever wasted here. For Ernst Fuchs's paintings offer a tumultuous show of intuitive skill and bravura style that makes comparison with his own favorite painters of the Northern Renaissance—Hieronymus Bosch, the younger Pieter Brueghel, Matthias Grünewald—really much more fitting than the modern Surrealists with whom, at first anyway, one may be tempted to compare him.

BARRY ULANOV

ERNST FUCHS / ATTEMPTED COMMENTARY ON
MY PAINTING

FOR me, the world of images is one of those parables whose language, enigmatic though it often is and hard to decipher, seeks to express the inexplicable mystery of the creation and of the Creator who made the whole universe a likeness of His everlasting glory. Through inward perceptions, the inner eye of almost all men sees thoughts and ideas which have an image-like and parabolic character. This world of inner images, images that often have little to do with the impressions the physical eye receives from its environment, is at the same time the revealing domain of symbols and the domain in which spirits and angels approach men. It is a realm so full of color and music, so rich, that a human mind just entering it feels almost menaced by its undreamed-of abundance.

This is the spiritual realm from which I create. The men of antiquity called the state of looking into this inner province and of being spoken to from there *inspiratio*. It was an enthusiasm that made itself known in every possible form to the artist. Today we are able to see an unbroken line of ancestors of those artists who express the world of inner images, artists who, I am tempted to say, share their prophetic and esoteric knowledge with each other like the members of a mystical tribe. Out of the prophetic books arise the founding fathers of this art. Through Moses, God chose Bezalel, builder of the ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the propitiatory, the lamp stand, and all the other appurtenances (see Ex 31:1-11), commanding him to fashion them like their heavenly prototypes and thus to make visible to all the people what up to then only the elect were allowed to behold.

Like Bezalel, all the artists of an earlier age served only the heavenly mysteries; things profane, like furniture and fabrics, were embellished by the people themselves. Up to the time of the Reformation, at least in the West, the vocation of the artist was a central one. Anonymously for the most part, he served the revealed mysteries, as one commissioned by the Church. In later days, we find him leading an even more hidden life; though without that commission, he still leaned toward revelation, creating those pictures that are the parables of the spiritual world. In the nineteenth century, Redon and

Bresdin handed down to us the inheritance they had been given by Blake and Fuseli—to mention only a few—and which they in turn, by way of the Mannerists, had received from Bosch, Brueghel, Manzu, and Grünewald.

In the twentieth century, almost all art breathes apocalyptic air. Suddenly there exist artists, in frightening numbers, who seek to make visible what is ordinarily invisible. The griefs of our day are the threatening elixir of life that intoxicates almost all of them. While living in the nitrogen of world catastrophes they see the images of present, past, and future pains and promises, in an opulence that mocks every attempt to rationalize it.

Even in my early youth I tried to paint "fine" pictures. Almost always I clung to inner images, only rarely did I draw from nature. When I saw the paintings of Hans Baldung and Grünewald for the first time, and later when I saw Bosch, I thought that finally I was receiving the legacy of my fathers; I felt related to them as a matter of course and looked upon them as if they were my fathers by blood. Without great difficulty I acquired the magical, "fine" style of expression and the use of those almost alchemistic materials which they employed in their work. On the whole this craft seems to have an imprint of worship that surely must come from the art of the icon. Later I discovered similar ideas in some of my own contemporaries. Since then I have no longer thought of myself as a "lone wolf." Images burst on me. Often I am unable to explain them; at times they are as oddly strange to me as they are to the viewer. There are other times when images invade my mind, images that I would not like to paint because I feel that one should not paint them. Other painters, it seems to me, have seen and felt similar or the same things and have kept them to themselves.

By this I mean to say that there are realms of inspiration that defy representation because of a special quality, a sacredness that commands fear and arouses love.

(This article originally appeared as "Versuch eines Kommentars zu meiner Malerei" in *Die Kunst und das schöne Heim*, LVI, 8, May 1958, pp. 288–291.)



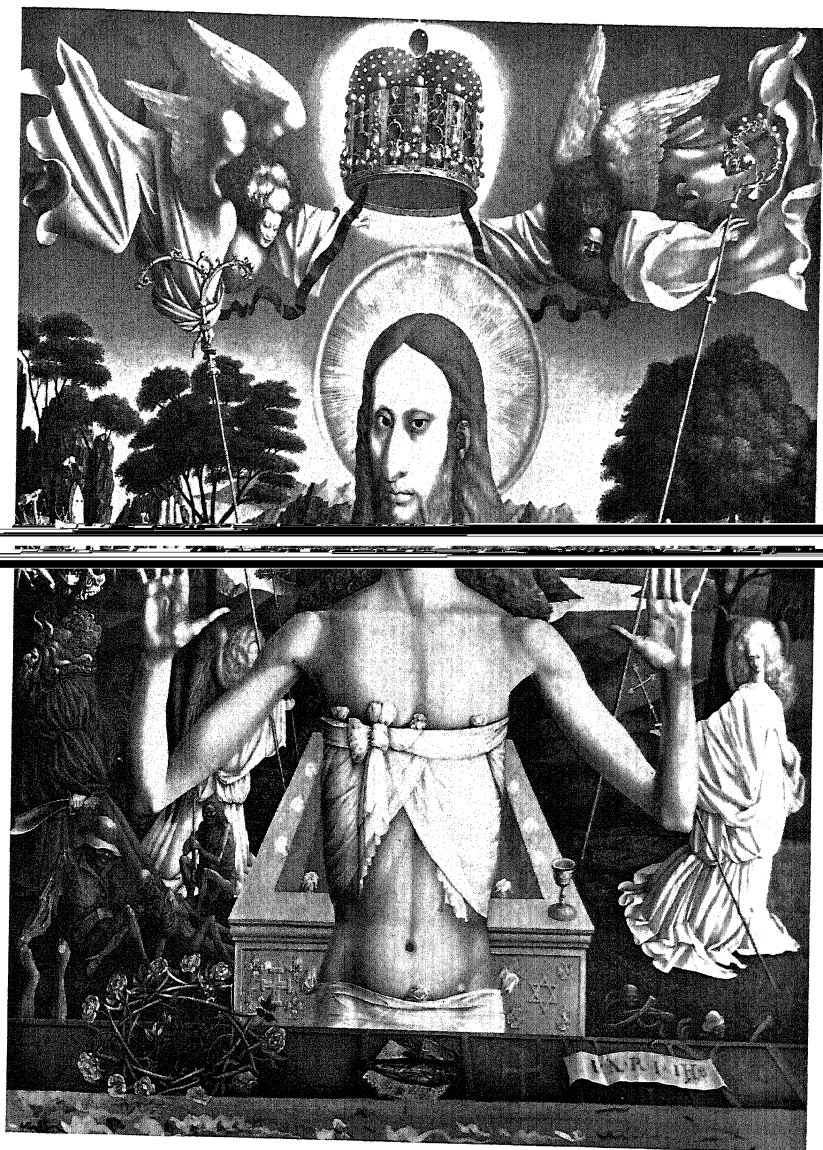
ERNST FUCHS: Moses Before the Burning Bush

The Lord appears to Moses in a fire flaming out of a bush, a bush burning but not burnt (see Ex 3:2). In the midst of the bush—and of the Lord—Moses sees the Menorah, the great seven-branched candlestick ordained by the Lord for His tabernacle (see Ex 25:31–37). The Menorah is itself a type of tree, whose branches burn endlessly to proclaim the greatness of Yahweh and are not consumed, neither in the wilderness through which Moses leads his people nor in the wilderness in which Christ fasts. Both deserts are recalled by the painter's landscape. But this picture is also a kingly one: Moses, monarch of his people, stands transfixed before his Lord. Over all is set the face of the King of Kings. Mount Horeb, where Moses saw the vision of the bush, is a jewel in the crown of Christ; His tears and sweat of blood are precious stones coursing down His face in shining splendor.



ERNST FUCHS: Christ Crowned With Thorns

This face of Christ is a parable of patience. Fuchs's interpretation of the Suffering Servant's countenance is as that of a Hasidic Jew, complete to every detail of his hair. And the imitation of Christ enjoined here is not only a contemplation *of* Him, but *with* Him—a rare spiritual experience.



ERNST FUCHS: The Risen Christ

A gallery of types and figures out of centuries of religious images crowds round the Lord, whose shroud of death has turned into a tight tourniquet of life binding up His wounds and covering His nakedness. Among the many rich details are the skeletons of war and famine and plague (bottom left), two ornate angels (on either side of the tomb), a Bosch-like cavalcade of evil (center left), symbols of the two Testaments, the cross and the star of David (left and right on the tomb), and the crown of thorns blossoming with roses in celebration of the Resurrection. The whole has a stateliness and a majesty and a meditative quality reminiscent of the great Flemish painters of Christ.



ERNST FUCHS: The Assumption of Mary

An ecstatic Mary dances before the Lord like David before the tabernacle. This cartoon for a mural bursts with joy. It cannot contain within the boundaries of the picture all the motions of happiness and streaks of light that surround Mary as she rejoins her Son crucified and risen. Christ's garment and crown resemble those of the High Priest of Israel, His breastplate is the "Shield of David," His arms are outstretched as on the cross, and from His wounded hands shoot forth rays of glory.

SURVEYS

Herbert Haag

THREE VOICES AT BASEL

IN THE middle 40s, when Hitler's reign of terror came to an end, the whole of Europe breathed freely again. Though from 1933 to 1945 the power of evil had been unleashed as never before, for a long time the extent of the crime against the Jewish people had not been known, least of all by Germans. Were the evidence not unmistakable, one would find it hard to believe even today that in those dark years six million Jews suffered the most inhuman death.¹

Whatever God does He does, not to harm but to heal, not to doom but to save, so Scripture proclaims. Though His doings are part of the unfathomable mystery of His wisdom and love, and though the "Why these wholesale slaughters?" is more bewildering than many another "Why," believing Jews and believing Christians can never doubt for a moment that these events, disastrous and unspeakable as they were, are included in God's plan of salvation, and that blessing will grow from them. *Melius . . . judicavit de malis bene facere, quam mala nulla esse permittere*, "God thought it better to turn evil into good than not to permit evil at all," wrote St. Augustine.² And the psalmist sings:

*Those that sow in tears
shall reap rejoicing.
(125:5)*

The fruits of these tears are varied: Some are of the temporal order, others of the realm of the spirit; some obvious, others hidden. It is certainly neither rash nor contrary to the biblical message to see in the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state an earthly reparation granted to Jews because of the great suffering they endured. Among

1. See William Keller, "Ledger of Death," *The Bridge*, I, 283-291.

2. St. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, XXVII (PL 40:245).

the spiritual fruits of those years of pain—fruits that ripen slowly—is, no doubt, the *rapprochement* between Christians and Jews. In several European countries, groups and movements have sprung up that have made it their purpose to combat anti-Semitism and turn the strained relationship of the past into one of mutual understanding, indeed, of friendship. In all these efforts, the creation of an amicable social and civic relationship has been the main desire. What has impelled Christians has been the wish to make amends; even though the slaughterers neither were nor wanted to be Christians (a fact that is unfortunately often forgotten by Jews, particularly by those in Israel), the crime was committed in Christian Europe. All over the continent, a few valiant men and women assisted Jews at the risk of their own lives;³ still, the majority of Christians were passive on-lookers of the tragedy.

To generate a climate of good will between Christians and Jews is obviously easier than to engage them in theological conversation. On the other hand, neither Christians nor Jews can be quite content to meet on purely humanitarian grounds; they have to break through to a higher level. Both believe that God loves man, yet differ on the manifestation of this love—a disagreement they cannot ignore for long. Thus many Christian-Jewish groups have suffered from their inability to face and discuss theological differences; there have been those whose members hardly dared pronounce the name of Jesus, with the result that some have felt their efforts at a dead end.

It was courageous, therefore, when a Protestant, a Catholic, and a Jewish scholar arranged a theological meeting during Pentecost week of 1958. Invitations were extended only to those who, because of their previous publications and activities, seemed suited to this delicate undertaking. Thus about thirty participants, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews from Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, gathered at Basel for a private exchange of ideas. The meeting, sponsored by the *Christlich-jüdische Arbeitsgemeinschaft*

3. When I say "few," I mean few in relation to the rest of the population. But the brave were more than a handful. According to a news dispatch of June 24, 1960, the city parliament of West Berlin had then under consideration a bill that would offer grants to Berliners who had helped Jews escape the Nazi plan of extermination. When introducing the bill, Senator Joachim Lipschitz declared that there were 1,400 known cases of Berlin Jews who had been saved from certain death by non-Jews, friends and strangers. (See *The New York Times*, June 25, 1960.)

der Schweiz, was opened by its president, Professor Hendrik van Oyen of the Protestant theological faculty at Basel University. All sessions took place in the parish house of the Catholic Community, and on the three consecutive days of the conference the participants were luncheon guests of the Evangelical Church Council, the Catholic Community, and the Hebrew Congregation.

For the theme of the meeting, its initiators chose "Salvation present and salvation expected, according to both the Christian and the Jewish traditions." The invitation expressed the two topics more completely:

(1) Salvation present. To what extent, according to the Christian faith, is the salvation God promised to His people and to all peoples historically present in Jesus and in the Church? And to what extent has, even according to the Jewish view, salvation been present since the time of Moses, indeed, since the time of Abraham?

(2) Salvation expected. Is it possible to state specifically the kind of fulfillment of God's promise the believing Jew expects, and how is this expectation related to the salvation the Christian still hopes for?⁴

This selection was a happy one, for salvation divinely promised and realized is not only the primary concern of the Jewish as well as of the Christian faith but also the central theme of Scripture. Thus Scripture could be made the basis of conversation. Moreover, the question of the Messiah was included in the theme, while the question of Jesus was not explicitly asked. To have done so would have been premature and most likely would have caused the conference to fail.

SALVATION: HISTORIC REALITY

AS THE program of the meeting announced, the first day was devoted to salvation as a reality. There was agreement that, for Jews and Christians alike, the historic character of revealed religion is one of its immovable pillars. In fact, Christianity and Judaism are the world's only historic religions; they alone are rooted in history, they alone tied to sacred events. That salvation rests on deeds of God that have left their mark on yesterday and on tomorrow was emphasized by the Catholic speaker of the day, Father Paul Démann of the Con-

4. *Freiburger Rundbrief: Beiträge zur Förderung der Freundschaft zwischen dem Alten und dem Neuen Gottesvolk im Geiste beider Testamente*, XI, 41/44 (November 1958), p. 39.

gregation of Notre Dame de Sion, editor of the Parisian *Cahiers Sioniens*; by its Jewish speaker, Isidor Werczberger, instructor in religion at Basel's Hebrew Congregation; and, particularly, by the Protestant speaker of the following day, Professor Oscar Cullmann of the University of Basel.

Even though the New Testament speaks of future salvation in a perspective different from that of the Old, both, Professor Cullmann emphasized, have this in common: They see salvation-to-come tied to redemptive history. What distinguishes Christianity as well as Judaism from other religions is the fact that, for them, salvation and revelation are historical. Salvific history—the great deeds of God and the divinely established link between them—is not a garment to be put on and off at will but the very heart of the two biblical religions. Therein is their solidarity. The moment one or the other abandons its historic character by dissolving it into metaphysics or existentialism, Professor Cullmann continued, solidarity between them ceases; their common bond is then no deeper than their bond with other religions, their solidarity no longer a solidarity *sui generis*.⁵

Judaism and Christianity are also at one in this: The salvific deeds of God—the revelation at Sinai, the redemptive work of Christ—happened once and for all time but, till the end of ages, they must become an ever-new reality in the life of every man. It is for this reason that the Protestant speaker on the presence of salvation, Dr. Edward Buess of Basel, called the Pauline formula “with Christ” the mark of the New Testament.

To be with Christ means to have died with Christ (see Rom 6:8). God wills the life of man, yet in the sight of the all-holy God the sinner must die: This is the contradiction with which the Old Testament ends. The New Testament resolves this contradiction by its witness that the Christ died in our stead; drawn into His death we die in order that we may rise to a new life with God. How does Judaism resolve man's conflict between the fate of death and the promise of life?

To be with Christ means to live in the strength of the divine life given us in Him. The true life is His gift, but the very fact that it is given us makes it a never-ending task. Through love we take hold of this life: through the love, that is, with which we thank Him for the love with which He loved us first (see 1 Jn 4:19).⁶

5. See *ibid.*, p. 53.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Father Démann, no less than Dr. Buess, stressed that Jesus' death and resurrection must become effective in the life of the believer but he also insisted that salvation is not merely redemption of the individual or of God's people but something that extends to the cosmos.

The tradition common to Christians and Jews knows of divine interventions in history, of deeds that strengthen God's reign and foster His plan for men. In the Christian perspective, the Incarnation of God in the fullness of time is the intervention that surpasses all others. . . . As the person of Jesus comprises and completes Israel's mission, so His life includes and anticipates the Church's history. Since her entire work is realized only in the course of centuries and step by step, Jesus is in a way contemporaneous with every man, from the days of Abraham till the end of time. . . . Thus history signifies and prepares salvation—this in particular was the work of the Ancient Covenant—but it also contains, though not yet visibly, salvation's fulfillment. Because God-made-man is present in the created world, history has become, as it were, a sacrament.⁷

Though he applied the principle in a different way, Mr. Werczberger, too, spoke of the continuing presence of God's salvific deeds. In his daily life, he said, the devout Jew experiences God's covenant with Abraham and that with Israel at Sinai as the surety of his salvation. As often as he recites the *Shema'*, he accepts the burden of these words, joins his forebears who stood at Sinai, and renews that covenant for himself. The same may be said of Torah. Before the observant Jew sits down to study it, he thanks God that He chose Israel out of all the peoples of the earth and entrusted to her His teaching; in doing so, he renews revelation in the everyday. Another renewal of the covenant is the Sabbath. When, on Friday evening, a Jew receives the Sabbath from God, he professes that he is summoned not only to receive but also to realize the covenant. There is finally, Mr. Werczberger went on, the perpetual renewal of the Abramatic covenant through circumcision, a renewal that differs from all others in that it happens only once in the life of every Jew. Moreover, while the recitation of the *Shema'*, the study of Torah, and the observation of the Sabbath renew the covenant for the individual Jew, circumcision does it for the whole people.⁸

I wish Mr. Werczberger had also mentioned the Jewish feasts,

7. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

8. See *ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

for according to biblical and non-biblical traditions they are not merely remembrances of the past but salutary re-presentations of the historically unrepeatable saving deeds of God. Thus Israel was commanded to keep the Passover as a feast of the Lord and as *zikkaron*, a redemptive memorial (see Ex 12:14). Again, the Mishnah writes: "In every generation a man is bound to regard himself as though he personally had gone forth from Egypt."⁹ The statements of the Christian speakers, too, left things unsaid. Their reflections on the sacramental character of history would have gained much had they been complemented by a treatment of the sacramental structure of the New Testament economy of grace.

As the conference progressed, it became increasingly clear that, though the Christian and Jewish views of history are in many ways alike, they disagree on the direction history takes. According to the Christian view, history moves toward a goal: In the age we call the age of the Old Covenant, history pointed to the coming of the Messiah who is Jesus of Nazareth; in the age we call the age of the New Covenant, it points to the return of the same Jesus at the end of ages. Christian theology sees in these two advents of the Messiah, God's decisive interventions in history. According to the Jewish view, however, there is only one decisive intervention, God's covenant with Israel at Sinai. Since then, there have been and there will be other interventions, but neither those of the past nor those of the future, not even the coming of the Messiah, will essentially change the course of history.

Astonished and troubled by the thought the Jewish speakers had offered, some of their Christian partners remarked that it threatened to empty biblical thought of its characteristic features, that it was Greek rather than prophetic. The Jewish participants countered that not even the messianic days will bring history to its conclusion. Its end will come only when all future salvation has become superfluous because mankind will have reached it by the integral observance of Torah. Thus the concepts of "salvation present" and "salvation expected" seem much more intertwined in Jewish thought than in Christian theology.

9. Pes. 116b; cf. *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino, 1935-48), *Pesabim*, p. 595.

SALVATION: ESCHATOLOGICAL REALITY

IN ORDER to avoid repetitions, I think I had better turn to the reflections that filled the second day of the conference. Its principal Christian speaker was Professor Cullmann. I should like to proceed with a brief summary of his thoughts as well as I remember them; a fuller treatment of his theme may be found in his book, *Christ and Time*.¹⁰

RE-CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

Professor Cullmann spoke of the perspective that distinguishes Old and New Testaments. For the first, the relationship between past redemptive history and salvation-to-come is much more pronounced than for the second. For ancient Israel, the great turning point of redemptive history was to be in the future, whereas for Christianity, it has taken place. (To what extent Judaism, at least in the form presented by its major spokesmen at the conference, continues to expect that great turning point seems open to question.) The New Testament, even more radically than biblical Judaism, still hopes for a turning of eons but it also knows of a decisive mid-point in the history of salvation, the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. These two events are much more central and normative for the Christian faith than are the calls of Abraham and Moses for the Jewish faith. Hence the tension between "already fulfilled" and "not yet completed," between the death of Jesus and His return. To illustrate his thesis, Professor Cullmann used this image: Though the decisive battle has been fought, we still await the day when victory will be celebrated; victory is assured but the war continues till the final peace.

Thus the New Testament speaks of the "end," the "end of ages," the "end of all things" (see 1 Cor 15:24; Heb 9:26; 1 Pet 4:7), and this is part of its newness. In what way will this "end" make manifest the redemption accomplished? To what extent will it add something new? Though the things to come are called apocalypse, disclosure, Professor Cullmann did not think the word should be understood merely in its etymological sense, as if the apocalypse we

10. See Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, trans. Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950).

expect were only to uncover what is already present. Here he turned against Karl Barth, who seeks to explain the end of ages by the image of a table fully set: Though the table has been prepared, the dishes remain hidden because a cloth has been spread over them; in the end, however, the cloth will be withdrawn, and the things prepared will be visible. But Barth's thought is not the doctrine of the New Testament. True, judgment has taken place (see Jn 3:18-19; 12:31), yet its unveiling and the pronouncing of sentence will be special acts of God. Again, with the ascension of Jesus the kingly reign of the Christ has begun but is not yet manifest; its manifestation for which we hope will be the work of God who will make Christ's kingship not only visible but fully effective. Thus the apostles proclaim that the hostile powers have been vanquished and, at one and the same time, that they will be vanquished in the end (see 1 Pet 3:22; Phil 2:10; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 10:13).

In the end, God will bring about a new eon, hence the dead who died in Christ do not yet possess fully what we hope for. They remain part of this eon, Professor Cullmann continued, and therefore participate in its tension. No doubt, they are close to Him for theirs is the *pneuma*, theirs the power to rise. Yet they are still waiting, waiting for an event that concerns the whole world and thus also themselves: God's intervention, which will make world and flesh new.

What is it, Professor Cullmann asked, that characterizes the final event we look for, the event that will make effective what has already come to pass: judgment, Christ's reign, His victory over sin and death? The event-to-come will affect the cosmos of which we are a part: Redemptive history is to be completed, not outside the compass of this world but within it. The whole cosmos must be transformed in order to conclude in glory what was determined in weakness. Thus the first Christians expected the Christ to return to earth: He who had first come as the Man of pain, as the suffering Servant of Yahweh, would come again in majesty, as the King of glory. Since the final salvific event is not disconnected from the biblical events that preceded it, we hope that Israel will eventually turn to Him; with the first Christians we await a new Jerusalem, for Jerusalem can never lose its central meaning for redemptive history.

This was the answer Professor Cullmann gave to his own question: The nature of the final salvific event is a re-creation of the universe.

Heaven and earth will be made new. God will intervene, and sin and death will be no more. Through the might of resurrection, the cosmos will be transfigured so that the hostile powers of sin and death will not only be vanquished but vanish, not only be bound but destroyed. The newness the returning Christ will bring, however, will envelop not only the cosmos but every man. For it is biblical doctrine that all of us, not excluding those long departed, will in the end receive a new body. Despite their nearness to the Christ, the blessed still lack this perfection because the transfigured body is part of the wondrous recreation of the universe. This body of glory will be granted man since he is to be redeemed, not from the body but from the might of death. Though already begun, our redemption from the scourge of death cannot be complete until the entire universe is drawn into the triumph of Easter morning.¹¹

GOD'S REIGN

As the Catholic speaker of the second day, I could but complement Professor Cullmann's reflections. For the Israel of old, the establishment of God's reign was of eschatological dimension, something God would bring about without man's assistance. When Jesus first stepped forward to summon His kinsmen, He proclaimed that the reign of God was at hand. He did not say that it was present, rather that it had drawn near. Hearing His call, we are reminded of the "last days" the prophets foretell: With Jesus' coming, the final period of redemptive history has begun, the one preceding the end of ages when God's rule will embrace the whole earth. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Mt 4:17). And again: "After John had been delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mk 1:14-15). This saying recorded by St. Mark corresponds to the one cited from St. Matthew and is noteworthy for two reasons. First, "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" mean the same thing; respecting the feelings of His hearers, Jesus avoided pronouncing the name of God. Second, the passage bespeaks the tension between the present and future states

11. See *Freiburger Rundbrief*, loc. cit., pp. 53-54.

of God's reign, the very essence of salvation. The time is said to be "fulfilled," the time of hoping and waiting ended. Still, God's reign has not yet come, it is only "at hand." It is here and not here. It is like a seed; one might almost say that it is like a child in the womb of its mother, present and not yet present. This seminal existence of God's reign, its still being en route, Jesus explained in the parables of the leaven and of the mustard seed. The presence of God's reign, on the other hand, is manifest in Jesus' casting out of demons. Thus He proved that God rules, not Satan: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:28).

Though come upon the world, the reign of God is, Jesus leaves no doubt, an eschatological reality. He bids His disciples pray to the Father without ceasing that His kingdom come (see Mt 6:10). When at the Last Supper He offered the cup to His disciples, He declared: "Amen I say to you, that I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mk 14:25). Only when the Son of Man will have come in majesty, and all the angels with Him; only when He will have gathered the nations around the throne of His glory, will He, the King, bid those who loved their brethren in need take possession of the kingdom (see Mt 25:31-46). This day may be far off; in any case, its advent is known to none but the Father (see Mt 24:36).

Jesus' discourse on the test of love makes two things clear. First, in order to come truly under God's reign a man's whole life must be ordered toward the Christ. Second, to enter God's kingdom means to enter into everlasting life (see Mt 25:46). What Jesus offers is union with God, blissful and unending. "Life" in the New Testament is practically identical with "God's reign"; both concepts share in the tension between reality and expectation. Whereas St. John's Gospel proclaims that the believer in the Christ possesses, enjoys, everlasting life (see 3:36; 5:24), the synoptic Gospels see life as something to be hoped for. St. Paul formulates well the tension between what is present and what is to come when he says that we are stamped with the seal of the Christ and that we carry the Spirit as a pledge in our hearts: We have not yet obtained the fullness of salvation, only its earnest—a down payment as it were (see 2 Cor 1:22). Thus there is room for hope and expectation even in the life of him who is con-

vinced that in the Christ salvation has come; his eyes look forever beyond the present moment toward the future.¹²

MAN'S FREEDOM

Christians generally assume that in the life of Jews expectation plays a much greater role than in their own. As the common formula has it: In the eyes of Christians the Messiah is come, in the eyes of Jews he is still to come. It was, therefore, a surprise to many a Christian participant when statements by Jewish members of the conference gave a different impression.

Professor André Neher of the University of Strasbourg, the Jewish speaker of the second day, stressed that by studying and doing the Torah and its *mitzvoṭ*, its commandments, the pious Jew is assured of his salvation. Obviously, he cannot fulfill them with equal perfection at all times, but he can always seek the mercy of God who forgives every sinner turning to Him. There is no fault or failure that man cannot repair by his own repentance. Through *ma'asim* and *teshubah*, through good works and repentance, man enters the world-to-come. There is no great difference between the salvation a Jew expects and the salvation that is already his. The coming world, *'olam habba*, is simply a complement to this world, *'olam hazeh*. The dividing line between the two is death, and death is conquered by faith. Yet it must be made clear that man is destined to enter the future world simply because he is man, for God has put access to it entirely into the hands of His creature. He has made man free and thus cannot assist him in choosing what is good; this man must do himself in absolute autonomy. True, there are other currents in Judaism claiming divine assistance for man. True, God revealed to him good and evil, showed him the way, and always goes before him. But once He has marked man's path, His words are the same today as in the days of Moses: Behold, today I have set before you the ways of life and of death, of good and of evil. Now choose! (see Deut 30:15-19).

On hearing Professor Neher explain man's freedom as independence, a Christian could not help but be disturbed and ask what role the Messiah could possibly play in a salvific order of this kind. Was he still necessary? Was messianic expectation no longer one of the pillars

12. See *ibid.*, p. 56.

of the Jewish faith? Professor Neher answered that his statement concerned persons: It is the individual Jew who, through the fulfillment of a commandment, instantly enters the world-to-come, and the individual non-Jew who, through the fulfillment of a good work, gains a part in it. But there is another realm, that of the people. With regard to it, Jewish tradition speaks of *yemot ha-Mashiah*, the days of the Messiah. Their coming does not depend on *teshubah*, man's repentance, but on *ge'ulah*, the people's ransom by God. According to the Eighteen Benedictions, which the pious Jew recites thrice a day, messianic salvation contains these events: first, the ingathering of the dispersed of Israel; second, the restoration of God's kingship on earth through the mediation of just judges and true interpreters of what is right and good; third, the establishment of a community of saints consisting of the just, the pious, the elders, the scribes, and, from among the nations, the proselytes who wish to be part of the people of Israel; fourth, the return of God to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple; finally, the coming of the messianic king, the offspring of David. All this is of the future, for the people is still dispersed, God's kingship unrestored, the community of saints not yet established, the Temple still in ruin, and the Messiah not yet come.

Whereas entrance into the world-to-come is entirely within the power of the man who fulfills the commandments or repents his transgressions, the birth of the messianic age rests entirely with God. He alone can bring about *ge'ulah*, no effort of Israel can win her deliverance. She can do nothing, or rather she may do nothing, to hasten the messianic event. Since the work of deliverance is an act of sheer grace, and thus entirely God's province, all that she is allowed to do is to pray.

In Jewish perspective, the state of Israel cannot be considered, as is often done, a step toward messianic salvation, Professor Neher continued. The state has indeed a high religious value for Jews, for it makes possible the fulfillment of those commandments that are linked to the land and cannot be fulfilled elsewhere. True, in divine perspective, the foundation of the state may be a preparation for the coming of the Messiah but its founders did nothing to hasten his advent. All they did was to increase the moral opportunities shown to the Jews by the Torah. Had a Jewish state been established in

Argentina or Uganda, it would have had great political, but no religious, significance.

One must not forget that the expected *ge'ulah* will not necessarily be the last, as it certainly will not be the first. The deliverance from Egypt, the deliverance from Babylon, and the deliverance-to-come, all have the same import: Each one is simply the end of a salvific epoch. Thus the present exile of the Jewish people will hardly be the final one. After all, territorial exile may mean home in God, and home on earth exile from Him. If this is so, then there is no essential difference between exile and messianic event, no leap over a frontier that would permit us to leave history. If this is so, then the coming of the Messiah really solves nothing, Professor Neher declared; man's task will still consist of works that express his pilgrimage.¹³

DISAGREEMENTS

THERE is a deep cleavage, then, between this conception and the Christian doctrine of salvation. Messianic deliverance, as presented by Professor Neher, does not embrace all the peoples of the earth but only the people of Israel (though he stressed that it would restore her priestly mission in the service of the whole world); it does not bring about a radically new and lasting eon nor is it the mid-point that divides history into a time before and a time after redemption. In the eyes of the Jews, history's center is not the coming of the Messiah but the event at Sinai.

It is disconcerting that, though Jews and Christians both acknowledge the Hebrew Scriptures, they draw from them markedly different conclusions. Jews reproach us that we read the Old Testament in the light of the New. On the other hand, we may well contend that Jews read it in the light of the Talmud. One is tempted to envy the Apostle that there was no Talmud in his day: When he argued with his kinsmen, he kept within the bounds of Scripture and sought to prove to them that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised by the Torah and the prophets. Conversely, the Jewish participants in the Basel conference maintained that the Talmud, as the codification of oral tradition, holds equal rank with sacred Scripture. It is true that

13. See *ibid.*, pp. 47-49.

this concept cannot be alien to Catholics since in their belief, as contrasted with that of Protestants, tradition possesses normative character.

This brings me to the third day, chaired by Professor Karl Thieme of the University of Mainz. During one of the discussions, when I appealed to our Jewish partners to let themselves be guided by the prophetic message rather than by talmudic teaching, one Catholic member felt it was strange for a Catholic to suggest to Jews that they become Protestants. But his objection seems to ignore vital distinctions. The Church, after all, distinguishes between the tradition of faith and traditions that are mere customs. Moreover, is the authority on which talmudic commandments rest really legitimate? Whenever biblical injunctions are developed and adapted to a new age, ought we not expect that their essence be retained? The rabbinical prohibition, for instance, of eating milk and meat dishes together has very little to do with the original commandment of not boiling "a kid in its mother's milk" (Ex 23:19).¹⁴

Yet, whatever the authority of the Talmud may be, there can be no doubt that the utterances of the prophets are, or ought to be, equally dear to Christians and Jews. Neither of us can be attentive enough to their words; spokesmen of the Lord, they represent the faith of ancient Israel at its loftiest. There can be no question that the Talmud is a development of Pharisaism, which in Jesus' day was the dominant but certainly not the only school of thought. From the Middle Ages to this day, however, there have been trends moving in a direction quite different from that of Pharisaism. Thus all endeavors, particularly those alive in the state of Israel, to create an image of the religious Jew other than the one fashioned by the rabbis of old are worthy of our notice. It may well be that it is the Jews of Israel who are meant to give this new image reality.

COMMON PRAYER

THOUGH the participants in the Basel conference prayed together, common prayer could have held a more prominent place. The Jewish chairman of the second day, Dr. Ernst L. Ehrlich of Basel and Berlin, opened its deliberations with the *'Alenu* which, he declared, was a little summary of all that the Jewish faith holds concerning salvation:

14. To boil a kid in its mother's milk was a Canaanite ritual, a revolting pagan ceremony; its imitation was thus forbidden to the Israelite.

We hope therefore, Lord our God, soon to behold thy majestic glory, when the abominations shall be removed from the earth, and the false gods exterminated; when the world shall be perfected under the reign of the Almighty, and all mankind will call upon thy name, and all the wicked of the earth will be turned to thee. May all the inhabitants of the world realize and know that to thee every knee must bend, every tongue must vow allegiance. May they bend the knee and prostrate themselves before thee, Lord our God, and give honor to thy glorious name; may they all accept the yoke of thy kingdom, and do thou reign over them speedily forever and ever. For the kingdom is thine, and to all eternity thou wilt reign in glory, as it is written in thy Torah: "The Lord shall be King forever and ever" (Ex 15:18). And it is said: "The Lord shall be King over all the earth; on that day the Lord shall be One, and His name One" (Zach 14:9).¹⁵

There are many Jewish prayers a Christian may say without reservation. On the other hand, what should prevent a Jew from saying the "Our Father"? In its petitions, there are reflected the best and purest religious aspirations of the Jewish people at the turn of ages.

I have no doubt that a spiritual encounter between Christians and Jews is what it ought to be when it is lifted from the realm of human colloquy to that of divine praise. That this was possible at Basel, indeed, that the conversation took place, is, it seems to me, a unique event in the history of Jewish-Christian relations. It should therefore fill us with joy and confidence but, no less, with gratitude toward those responsible for it.

EDITOR'S NOTE

PROFESSOR HAAG's final suggestion is that Jews and Christians pray together more often. Some of our readers may wonder whether or not such prayer is compatible with the doctrine and discipline of the Church. Are Catholics not explicitly forbidden to join in prayer with non-Catholics? they may ask. To this the answer is simply No. What the Church does prohibit is *communicatio in sacris*, that is, the active participation of one of her children in the worship of another religious body. Though often misinterpreted as a petty exercise in authority, as an attempt to "confine" her members, this prohibition is but a safe-

15. *Daily Prayer Book*, trans. Philip Birnbaum (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1949), pp. 136, 138.

guard for the free growth of their faith. In fact, even if the Church had never spoken out, the very nature of things forbids a Catholic to take part in a liturgical act that tends to make his worship ambiguous and implies a denial of his own belief. If he wishes to remain honest, let alone faithful, he cannot serve two masters (see Mt 6:24).

To be more specific: For a Catholic it should be a delight to hear the father of a Jewish household say grace: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth." Not only will the utter simplicity of these words inspire him, they may well transport him into the presence of the One whom His disciples recognized by the way He broke and blessed the bread (see Lk 24:35). An entirely different matter is this passage from the Passover service:

"And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt" (Deut 26:8): not by the hands of an angel, and not by the hands of a seraph, and not by the hands of a messenger, but the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself, in His own glory and in His own person. As it is said: "For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord" (Ex 12:12).

"For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night": I, and not an angel. "I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt": I, and not a seraph. "And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments": I, and not a messenger. "I am the Lord": I am He, and no other.¹⁶

In all likelihood, this comment on two biblical verses is meant to gainsay the Christian belief in Jesus as the well-beloved Son, the One sent by the Father, the Word-made-flesh. Hence a Christian cannot recite this passage, nor even listen to it approvingly and still remain true to his faith.

But there seems to be no reason why Jews and Christians cannot pray with one another at a nonliturgical and thus private meeting such as the one held in Basel. There seems to be no reason why they cannot recite together one of the psalms, why both—believers in the living God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—cannot join their voices in a plea for mercy: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord hear my voice!" (Ps 129:1) or in an expression of trust:

16. *The Passover Haggadah*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1953), p. 37.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Ps 22:1). There is no reason against common prayer of this kind, but every reason for it: It suggests no deviation from the truth, no denial of faith, rather is it an affirmation of love and a pledge that one day the prophet's prediction will be fulfilled:

*For then I will change and purify
the lips of the peoples,
That they all may call upon the name of the Lord,
to serve Him with one accord;
From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
and as far as the recesses of the North
they shall bring me offerings.*
(Soph 3:9-10)

Loving One Another

*Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is from God.
And everyone who loves is born of God,
and knows God.
He who does not love does not know God;
for God is love.*
(1 Jn 4:7-8)

John M. Oesterreicher

THE SWASTIKA REAPPEARS

IN THE fall of 1959, the rebuilding of Cologne's Synagogue, ravaged like so many others by Nazi hands, was completed. For that festive though sad occasion, Zvi Asaria, its rabbi, wrote a history of Jewish life in that city,¹ to which the Archbishop of Cologne wrote one of the forewords:

Cologne, September 1, 1959

Nothing, perhaps, has brought so much shame on the civilization of our century as the persecution of Jews by Hitler's government and the destruction of their houses of worship.

Understandably, the German people wishes to make amends, insofar as amends can be made. But the stain of having been capable of such deeds of horror cannot be entirely wiped away.

With all our hearts, we wish our Jewish brethren the blessing of the Most High.

✠ Joseph Cardinal Frings

Only a few months later, the same Synagogue was defaced. The swastika and the slogan *Juden raus!*, Out with the Jews!, were smeared on its walls. Within a brief time, Jewish and Christian houses of worship in several parts of the world were similarly soiled. The incidents were widely reported, and article upon article was written on the possible origin of this infamy: whether it was the work of an international organization, a youthful craze, or some sort of mass hysteria. But little or no mention was made of the concern and protest of Christians. So that they will not be entirely forgotten, I should like to record two of them: one German, the other French; one the observations of the archdiocesan weekly of Cologne, the other a pastoral letter by the Bishop of Lille.

1. Zvi Asaria, *Die Juden in Köln* (Cologne: Bachem, 1959).

I

IN SEVERAL of its issues, the *Kirchen-Zeitung für das Erzbistum Köln* denounced the "revolting profanations" of synagogues and churches. The editors saw the reappearance of the swastika as a menace not only to the physical life of Jews but also, and even more so, to the moral life of Germans. It was not enough to identify and prosecute the delinquents, they pointed out; the real evildoers were those who glorified the unhappy past in speech and print. "We ask those charged with the appropriate judicial responsibility to exhaust all possibilities the law offers to protect us from the scribblers [who praise the Nazi era]. We may then also be preserved from the disfigurement of synagogues and churches" (January 17, 1960).

The issue of January 24, 1960, devoted its leading article, "The Premature Balance," to the fact that violations against justice, if un-repaired, continue to defile a society and, no matter how well-masked, will spill out their poison at an unexpected moment. To speak of the years under Hitler, the author complained, had become a social, and often a political, taboo. "One has to draw the line somewhere" was the byword of public opinion. But now the swastika and *Juden raus!* had reappeared beneath that line. Obviously, it had been drawn too soon. "A people unready to learn from its past may easily be condemned to repeating it. And our people will have learned nothing unless we teach our youth what really happened, honestly and without 'double-talk.'" The writer concluded:

Even though the Nazis be dispersed throughout many lands and subterranously keep up their troublemaking, they are not the only source of infection. The possibilities of madness and crime are not confined to one people. In all men and nations there dwells a frightening disposition toward evil. Hitler and his German hangmen were only evil's ghastly instruments, by no means predetermined instruments without will, rather instruments by their own choice. Here the realm of politics ends, for every moral decision is between God and Satan. This inner freedom to choose between good and evil erects the real iron curtain dividing the world; it alone assures man's dignity as His image, be he black or white, Jew or Christian.

On February 7, Cologne's Catholic weekly returned to the threat that the re-emergence of the swastika—symbol of death to everything

human, everything Jewish, everything Christian—meant to the whole of society. It quoted from the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, "With Deep Anxiety," Pius XI had issued on Passion Sunday, March 14, 1937. In it, the Pope had warned:

Whoever exalts race or the people or the state or a particular form of government or the bearers of political power or other fundamental values of the human community—however necessary and honorable be their function in the temporal order—whoever dislodges any one of them from its proper place in the earthly hierarchy of values, making it the supreme norm of all others, particularly those of religion, and thus turning it into an idol, perverts and distorts the God-given and God-commanded order of things. (See *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 29, 1937, p. 149.)

The same article recalled messages of Pius XII in which he indicted the merciless deportation of men, women, and children, the terror of concentration camps, the murder of many out of racial hatred, the superstition of race and blood—that ideology of pride which sought to take the place of the gospel—and in which he asked all men of good will to pledge their service to man and to a community whose nobility is in God. The friendship Pope John XXIII has shown toward Jews crowned the article which then brought the papal statements and actions together under one thought: The earth is the Lord's; it has room for, indeed, it is the home of all races, all peoples, all men.

A final article, dated February 14, 1960, was entitled: "Condemnation is not Enough." The frequent clamor that court and school right the wrongs of the past seemed to its writer the voice of ease, an attempt to place upon others the burden of counteracting the devilry of a Hitler in slaughtering millions of Jews, or of a Khrushchev in slaying Hungary's freedom fighters, even the very young ones. An adequate teaching of history, for instance, good though it would be, will not suffice. The stratagems of Satan cannot be conquered "except by true values and ideas, by values so curative, so vigorous, that nothing will be able to prevail against them." To say this, the author held, was not to entertain illusions. For a Christian remembers that Satan is like a roaring lion, ever in search of his victims. Evil will always reappear, in one form or another. The best instruction, then, is to implant in children humbleness of heart, reverence for all men, and praise of God the Creator.

Such were the observations of the Catholic weekly of Cologne.

II

THE second voice, more specific, more passionate than the first, was that of Cardinal Liénart in a Lenten pastoral on racial prejudice and misconceptions about Jews.² The pastoral was clearly a theological document, yet its directions, given by the Bishop of Lille to his own diocese, were couched in simple language, quite often in the idiom of the people. At times he spoke simply of "the Jews," without making any distinction between Jewish officialdom and Jewish people, so as to destroy more effectively the false notions or generalizations that in the past made Christians susceptible to the disease of anti-Semitism.

Lent, 1960

My Brethren:

Recently, acts of hostility were perpetrated against the Jews in various countries: in Germany, in England, in Belgium, in Italy, and in France, too. Swastikas, Jewish stars, and anti-Jewish slogans were put on the walls of synagogues; one synagogue was even set on fire. We cannot but deplore these acts, particularly because they are the disquieting signs of a returning anti-Semitism, the height of whose outrages we witnessed during the last war. In those days, Jewish families were deported en masse under frightful conditions, and several millions of men, women, and children were put to death in the gas chambers of Germany—men, women, and children whom their tormentors could charge with no other crime than that they were of Jewish stock.

Christians must be clear of complicity with so dangerous a state of mind, despite the religious pretexts behind which it occasionally takes cover. Now that this frame of mind has made its reappearance, it seems timely that we warn you against it and, with the help of this letter, explain to you the little known doctrine of the Church on the destiny of the Jewish people. This doctrine obliges us to reject anti-Semitism absolutely, from the human as well as the religious point of view, and to adopt toward the Jewish people an attitude that is the very opposite of anti-Semitism, the attitude of respect and love.

2. See *La Documentation Catholique* (Paris, 1960), col. 299-300.

Looking at it from the human point of view, anti-Semitism exploits the evil instinct that so easily sets the various families of mankind against each other. There are those for which we feel a natural attraction and there are others which arouse in us antipathy or contempt.

Such antipathy is evident in the way we look at the black or the yellow peoples, at the North Africans or even at some of the European nations beside us. More often still, such antipathy brands our relationship toward the Jewish people who, dispersed among all the nations, yet preserve in our midst their ethnic characteristics, their own mentality, their customs, their religion.

Let us be on guard against this blind racism, the source of so much injustice and enmity. When we experience it within ourselves, as everyone does, we must rid ourselves of it; we must do so, chiefly because of our Christian faith. We know that all men, despite the diversity of races, are members of the same humankind created by God in unity; that all men are our brothers; that they all have a right to our respect and our love. Moreover, we believe in a universal redemption: In and through it, Christ Jesus, our Saviour and Head, calls all men without distinction to form but one single people of God. Within its ranks there is, according to St. Paul, no longer Jew or Greek, man or woman, slave or freeman (see Gal 3:28) but one single humanity wholly joined in Christ and summoned to realize its common, supernatural destiny.

In such a perspective, there is no room for anti-Semitism; the religious pretexts some try to invoke cannot alter this truth.

Hence we must defend ourselves against the ready-made, far too simple idea that the Jewish people have become a people cursed by God because, through their responsible leaders, they rejected the promised Messiah in the person of Jesus; worse still, that they are a nation of deicides because they made the Son of God die upon the cross. From premises like these the conclusion may easily be drawn that they deserve the contempt and hostility of Christ's faithful disciples. And from there, it is only a short step to the assumption that anything is permitted to make them pay for their crime.

The true doctrine of the Church is entirely different; the attitude she demands toward the Jewish people is exactly the opposite of this spirit of reprisal.

It is not true that the Jewish people bears the first and only responsibility for the death of Jesus. The deepest cause of His death upon the cross is the sins of men. Consequently, we are all responsible; the Jews were only our delegates.

Nor is it true that the Jews are deicides, for had they been aware of His divinity they would have believed in Him and would not have made Him die.

This unawareness earned for them Jesus' own forbearance: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). His apostles, too, proclaimed this unawareness in the presence of the people of Jerusalem, immediately after Pentecost. "You disowned the Holy and Just One," St. Peter told them in one of his first sermons. "The author of life you killed. . . . And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But in this way God fulfilled what He had announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, namely, that His Christ should suffer. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Ac 3:14-19).

It would be even more unjust to hold the entire Jewish people responsible, those of today as those of Jesus' day, and to forget our debt to them. Through them the whole revelation of God's plan in the Old Testament came to us, and through them we inherited the divine promises. Their prophets are our prophets. Their psalms have become our prayer. They are the stock to which our divine Founder belongs as man: Jesus, Son of David, our Saviour. And so does the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother; so do St. Joseph, the Twelve, St. Paul, and the infant Church of Jerusalem. "Spiritually, we are Semites," said Pope Pius XI. Lest we deny our origin and commit an injustice, we must not turn the Jewish people over to a collective reprobation.

Nor is it true that Israel, the chosen people of the Old Covenant, has become an accursed people in the New.

Actually, the religious destiny of Israel is a mystery of grace, and we Christians ought to ponder it with respectful sympathy.

No one experienced this drama more painfully than did St. Paul, the former Pharisee, the Jew who could say of himself that he had shown much more zeal for the traditions of his fathers than had many of his contemporaries (see Gal 1:14). By God's grace converted on the road to Damascus, he felt in his innermost being the

misfortune of his brethren dwelling in incredulity. With all his soul, he sought to understand God's mysterious designs for His chosen people. In chapters 9 to 11 of the Epistle to the Romans, he discloses the secret of His designs to us, and his teaching is so full of hope for the Jewish people, so full of instruction for us, that we can do no better than receive and follow it.

But what was Israel's fault, according to St. Paul? To have thought that she could save herself by observing the commandments of the Law, although salvation is God's free gift, a gift obtained by faith in His promises and in the Christ who made them reality. She was wrong not to believe and, since then, has left her road and is astray.

Does it follow, then, that Israel has been irrevocably rejected by God? Far from it, says St. Paul, for God is faithful and His gifts are without repentance (see Rom 11:29). He never takes them back. Israel has not become a people accursed but remains the chosen people. The thread of her destiny has not been severed; it is only suspended.

Has the straying of His people hindered the unfolding of God's work? Quite the opposite. It has given the redemptive work greater breadth. For a new phase has begun: the entrance of the pagan peoples into the Church of Jesus Christ. Now all the nations are admitted to membership in the new people of God and are summoned to extend it to the ends of the world and to the end of time. They have been grafted, as it were, upon the old trunk of Israel, deprived of its natural branches, in order to draw life from its sap and make it bloom even more richly. But when the full number of Gentiles have been grafted into the trunk (see Rom 11:25), the day will have come for Israel to be placed again by God on the tree of salvation and to resume the course of her providential destiny.

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" St. Paul cries out before the splendor of this divine plan. "How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways! . . . To Him be the glory forever" (Rom 11:33-36).

Since we are Christians because of Israel's momentary effacement, we must recoil from self-glorification at her expense. We must not set ourselves up against her, rather ought we remember that if God permitted the natural branches to fall so tragically, He could cut us off, too, should we be unfaithful. To understand this mystery is to be inspired to personal humility and to love for Israel.

Some may find, my dear brethren, that in today's world, beset by grave internal and external conflicts, the problem of anti-Semitism does not warrant that we engage your attention upon it. You, at least, will understand that the Church cannot suppress what she reads in holy Scripture. Besides, I believe that the conclusion to be drawn from the Church's teaching on this particular point is of sufficiently universal bearing. It tells us what attitude we, as Christians, ought to adopt toward the most serious problems of the present world and what immense service we may render, provided we remain faithful to the Gospel.

In a Christian soul the spirit of racism has no place. Not only must we not hate or disdain the Jews, the North Africans, the Negroes or any people of this earth—we must love them as brothers and respect their human dignity. For we are all created in the image of God, we are all called in Jesus Christ to the same destiny of sonship in God.

Nor can there be class hatred in the soul of a Christian for, as St. Paul says, there is now no longer slave, no longer freeman, but a single people of God. When legitimate interests between men or nations clash, a Christian is not permitted to resolve such differences simply by "the right of the stronger." He must resolve differences in the spirit of mutual justice and love, as is the way of brothers who respect one another. Above all things, we must never injure the dignity of persons, be it physically by violence to their bodies or properties, be it morally by treating them like inferior beings or subjecting them to offensive humiliations.

We must even be prepared to forgive our enemies.

It is not in the ranks of "antis," whatever their banners, that the Christian ought to combat, for though the Church fights error she does not fight men. On the contrary, she invites us to place ourselves at the service of universal love, which our Lord Jesus Christ made His supreme command. His disciples are obliged to love all men and all nations; they also have the mission of spreading throughout the world the meaning of the equality of all men before God.

Who cannot see how urgent this task is and how much it deserves our dedication? The world we live in is unhappy. The divisions and hatreds that rend it apart only multiply its sufferings, and this because men no longer know how to love one another. Let us, then, take the Lord's commandment seriously. Let us be of those who truly love one

another. Thus we shall draw men along the only road leading to that peace everyone longs for: the peace of Christ.

✠Achille Cardinal Liénart

Though written only for his flock, the letter of this great pastor and teacher speaks to Christians everywhere. Its language is so clear, so strong that added words would merely lessen its immediacy.

Abiding in the Light

*He who says that he is in the light,
and hates his brother,
is in the darkness still.
He who loves his brother
abides in the light,
and for him there is no stumbling.
But he who hates his brother
is in the darkness
and walks in the darkness,
and he does not know whither he goes;
because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

(1 Jn 2:9-11)

ISRAELI REACTIONS

ON MARCH 27, Good Friday of 1959, the following story was carried by Israeli newspapers:

Rome (INA)—Yesterday Pope John XXIII modified a prayer that has been said for hundreds of years on Good Friday, the Friday before the Sunday on which the Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

The preceding Pope, Pius XII, had already begun to change this prayer. The ancient text had contained the following formula in Latin: "Let us pray for the 'treacherous' Jews." The late Pope directed that it be translated in this manner: "Let us pray for the unbelieving Jews."

Pope John has now decided to omit this epithet, and from this day forward the prayer will read: "Let us pray for the Jews, *Oremus pro Judaeis*."¹

Decades before this excision by Pope John, Catholic scholarship had taken pains to prove that, in the Latin of Christian antiquity, the epithet *perfidis* of the Good Friday intercession did not mean "treacherous," much less "perfidious" as we understand the word today, but simply "unbelieving"—that is to say, unbelieving in Jesus as the Christ.² As a matter of fact, any Jew could so describe himself, and even with a certain fervor. But no matter how carefully the semantics of the prayer be examined, such efforts alone cannot assuage a wound deeply embedded in the Jewish consciousness—the wound brought into being by the cruel behavior of some "Christians" of the past, especially during Holy Week. That this trauma is still felt by Jews

1. In printing the story, *Davar*, voice of the Histadrut, the General Federation of Labor, and *Al Ha-mishmar*, organ of Mapam, the United Workers' party, published a photograph of the Pope. All quotations from Israeli newspapers are translated from a comprehensive French survey, privately issued, of the Israeli reactions to the change in the Good Friday prayer.

2. For a discussion of this prayer and references to other literature on the subject, see Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J., "Pro Perfidis Judaeis," *The Bridge*, II, 212-223.

today is sometimes evident in their public and private attitudes towards the Church.

Precisely how well the memory of abuse has lingered can be seen in the works of Jewish historians. Heinrich Graetz, for instance, castigates the French clergy of the ninth century:

How malicious was the spirit animating [it] can be judged from the fact that the successive bishops of Béziers were in the habit of preaching vehement sermons from Palm Sunday until Easter Monday, exhorting Christians to avenge themselves on the Jews of the town, because they had crucified Jesus. The fanatical mob thus incited armed themselves with stones to attack the Jews. The mischief was repeated year after year for centuries.³

The more detached Cecil Roth, who calls the Catholic Church "always intensely objective, even in its severity," also refers to "the exposure [of the Jew] to licensed mob violence at Eastertide" and describes the prevailing attitude toward him during the Middle Ages:

He had come to be regarded widely not as a mere miscreant, but as a deliberate unbeliever, who persisted in denying the verity of what he knew to be true, and consciously battled in fact against the God whom he purported to worship.⁴

By eliminating the ambiguous words *perfidia* and *perfidia*, Pope John put the blessing of silence upon the endeavor of Catholic apologists and let fly another shaft of love into the ecumenical light. His action—initiated spontaneously before a Good Friday service and only later decreed—was the first of a number of similar gestures this Pope of great heart has made toward the Jews. His tokens of friendship seem to spring from a three-pronged root: the early example and teachings of St. Peter and St. Paul (see Ac 2:22, 29; Rom 11:28–29); the special consideration given to the plight and place of the Jewish people by his immediate predecessors; and above all, his own experience during the last war, of which Mrs. Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister, had this to say:

3. Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1945), III, 173.

4. Cecil Roth, "The European Age in Jewish History (to 1648)," *The Jews, Their History, Culture, and Religion*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York: Harper's, 1949), I, 220, 225.

During the second world war, when he was Apostolic Delegate to Constantinople, John XXIII busied himself with saving the Jews of the Balkans during the Nazi occupation; and this great personality gave proof of the heroic affections that animate him.⁵

I

NEVER was a change in the wording of a prayer so widely reported as this one. And nowhere were the comments so extensive as in the state of Israel. Of these, several deserve to be recorded, first perhaps, the views of *Al Ha-mishmar*:

The Jewish people has welcomed with great satisfaction the decision of Pope John XXIII to pray on Good Friday "for the Jews," and no longer for the "unbelieving" Jews, thus completing the work begun by his predecessor, Pope Pius XII. This change is but one of the signs of the new spirit that animates the ancient city of the Vatican, which no longer refuses co-existence. It is quite possible that at the General Council, which is to open in the not too distant future, we shall witness astonishing events. . . .

If the Vatican, fortress of conservatism, has not hesitated to change an offensive liturgical text, one may well ask whether or not the time has come for the Grand Rabbinate to fix its attention upon the text of some of *our* prayers. Day after day in his prayer, the religious Jew congratulates himself for not being a "goy" (and also for not being a woman!). . . . And on the eve of the Passover, can one still pronounce without embarrassment the petition: "Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that know thee not" (see Ps 78[79]:6)? It must be said to the honor of some devout Jews that they do not hesitate to suppress this phrase from the liturgy of the Seder.

Just as the reference to the "perfidious" Jews who "crucified Jesus" once created disturbances in the countries of the diaspora, so are the offensive expressions about the non-Jew in our own prayers a source of contempt and mockery in this re-found land of ours. May the decree of Rome give rise to a decree from Jerusalem.⁶

Even heartier than this comment is a signed article that appeared in Israel's leading Hebrew newspaper. Having given the facts, the writer remarks enthusiastically:

5. See *Davar*, March 3, 1959.

6. See *Al Ha-mishmar*, March 31, 1959.

There is no question here of a purely exterior change, and it is not a game of words to which we wish to give our attention. Among all peoples, prayer expresses the heart's joy or sorrow. Are we, then, not in the presence of an historic change that may well improve the relations between the two camps?

He goes on to speak of the tensions of the past two thousand years. The Christian world, he assumes, inherited the negative attitude with which some writers of antiquity spoke of the Jews as "the most despicable people on earth." Even as modern a man as Renan wondered whether it was not the Jewish spirit of separation, of hatred for Greek and Roman culture, that was responsible for the unhappy relationship between the Jewish people and the rest of the world. For the Jewish people, the writer of the article continues, the road of history is marked by pogrom after pogrom and, finally, by that most recent catastrophe of which the foundation of the state of Israel was the immediate result. He feels that this event and the gesture of Pope John are related to one another, and he concludes with these strong words:

In any case, the fact is that a hand has been extended to us. Let us grasp it with joy and thankfulness, and prove by our own acts that we are not responsible for the great hatred which has darkened our relationship with the Christian world for hundreds of years; we have paid for its consequences with the blood of our sons and our daughters. Let us prove to ourselves and to others that we carry hatred for no one, that we do not want hatred: On the contrary, it is love that we want, and the establishment of truly human rapport. It may well be that the hour has come for us to revise our own prayers and to suppress all offending passages. We need the sympathy of other peoples as we do the air we breathe. We are confronted with an alternative that is at the same time a question of life and death: Will we be isolated and cut off from the rest of the world or will we be able to live in harmony with it, be truly a part? Without doubt, a state that shows breadth and tolerance will draw and awaken sympathy, while a reactionary and intolerant state can arouse nothing but resentment and antipathy.⁷

A later issue of the same prominent newspaper devoted another article to a similar appeal:

7. See Shlomo Cohen, "Let us Pray for the Jews," *Davar*, April 17, 1959.

Some time ago, we gratefully acknowledged the noble gesture of the Pope. . . . There is no need to go to any great length to demonstrate the full significance of this important and happy event, though we do not wish to attribute to it a weight it does not have, as if we were on the verge of a revolutionary change in the relations between the state of Israel and the Jews, on the one hand, and the Christian world, on the other. It is sufficient to say that the head of the Catholic Church, with its hundreds of millions of faithful throughout the world has given proof of a courage and a sense of humanity that are worthy of every praise. Although the suppression is a small one, paradoxically, it is constructive in the noblest sense of the term.

The writer of these discerning lines does not doubt for a moment that thousands and thousands of Jews were unable to read this news without asking themselves when some of their own practices would be eliminated or adapted to the times. With great frankness, he speaks of certain strange marriage customs among Moroccan Jews in Israel and of the inflexible official attitude toward mixed marriages in the State. Finally he asks:

When will there be rabbis who have enough courage in their hearts, enough greatness in their souls, enough wisdom in their minds to renew, modify, and adapt the laws and the customs so that they will correspond to the conditions of our day and our life? When will the rabbis dare suppress those things that offend Jews so deeply?⁸

II

DISAPPOINTINGLY, these bold pleas have gone unheard, and hope has been shattered for official gestures similar to that of Pope John, at least for the present. The newspaper representing Orthodox Judaism responded to the suggestions for revision with the voice of irritation, an irritation so oblivious of historic perspective that it burdens the Good Friday prayer with all the ills that have fallen upon the Jewish people during the Christian era:

On the eve of the Easter of Christians, the Pope announced that henceforth one would no longer say: "Let us pray for the unbelieving Jews" but simply "Let us pray for the Jews so that God will lift the veil from their

8. See H. Shorer, "Things that must Disappear," *Davar*, April 30, 1959.

hearts and that they may recognize Jesus." This pious prayer has provoked, as one knows, pogroms and accusations of ritual murder. In real content, the modified text does not differ from previous texts: The Church shows great solicitude for our souls and prays that we will cease to be Jews. Here is one of the sources of anti-Semitism among Christians.

Those who have nothing but admiration for the things done by others—and there are such people in Israel—have declared their enchantment at the slight correction of this Easter prayer; they have launched a concerted campaign for "suppressions" in various religious formulas of the Jewish prayer book. One gentleman could not contain his emotions at this "humanitarian measure" of the Church and demanded that, without delay, we suppress from the Passover service the phrase: "Pour out thy wrath upon the nations," and this only sixteen years after the massacre of six million Jews by Christian peoples, with the tacit or explicit consent of the Church!

"Pour out thy wrath"; this desperate prayer of Judaism against the paganism that spilled the blood of our faithful; this admirable prayer of free men, offends, it seems, the delicate feelings of those who seek only to forget.⁹

Though not intended as an answer to the "uncompromising" stand taken by the voice of Orthodoxy, a letter to the editor of *Davar* serves as a graceful reply:

To be sure, the prayer: "Pour out thy wrath upon the nations" can be explained but it would be far better to dispense with complicated explanations and correct the prayer itself. After all the interpretations have been given, the prayer still remains basely chauvinistic and detrimental from an educational point of view. If the most conservative of all the Christian churches can sustain a change in a traditional text, can the Jewish religion, a religion of life and the most elastic of all, not do likewise?¹⁰

To pass judgment on a family quarrel, much less to settle it, is not among the prerogatives of an outsider. But one can hope that the voices pleading for the rule of love will not cease to speak out and that, in the end, they will be heard.

9. These words, from an editorial in *Ha-zofe*, April 17, 1959, were quoted in *Proche-Orient chrétien*, IX, 2 (April-June 1959), pp. 175-176. This periodical gives its own account of the Israeli reaction to the elimination of *perfidis* in the issue cited, pp. 174-177.

10. See *Davar*, May 4, 1959.

BOOKS

Jakób Jocz: A THEOLOGY OF ELECTION *

A JEW who accepts Jesus as the Messiah represents in his own person the healing of the schism that "divides historic Israel from the Church."

He belongs to both and in him both are united. He is not so much the bridge from the one to the other, as the focus of the eschatological promise: All Israel shall be saved. The presence of the Hebrew Christian in a predominantly Gentile Church serves as a reminder that God is still the God of Israel, of the Covenant, and of the Promises. In him the Church finds the visible demonstration of the faithfulness of God (p. 184).

The writer of these lines, a Polish-born Jew, ordained to the ministry of the Church of England, is now Professor of Systematic Theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto, and President of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance. Into a brief book of 193 pages, he has compressed many insights and deeply held convictions. He himself says that his book "is the result of years of searching, and [that it] was written under inward compulsion" (copyright page). One can readily believe it.

The author's major concern is to explore the ways of God with men and theirs with Him. Though not oblivious of Jewish suffering or of the unsettled state of Jews in many lands, he is concerned with both only in so far as they tell him something about the ancient covenantal bond with God or its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. Others may take issue with the book as a whole or with parts of it; for this reader it is a work of peace. At times, its author appears convinced that he alone has the true insight into the mystery of Israel. Still, some of his arresting statements may be nothing more than a part of his rhetorical equipment.

According to Dr. Jocz, the whole of Israel's history has "revelational" significance. Ancient Hebrew history, although profane in every other respect, is "sacred with a view to its purpose." This purpose

* London: S.P.C.K., 1958.

is simply Israel's "relatedness to the Messiah." Before His coming, her history is "fore-history, an introduction to, or the background for, the Incarnation of the Son of God" (p. 2). But even after His coming, Jewish history is not left undisturbed: "It is the history of the People of God in suspense—it points towards the End." Its contemporary significance is to show that the word of God is contemporaneous, "that the God of Israel is and remains the God of the Covenant." With Karl Barth, therefore, Dr. Jocz sees in the Jewish people "the one natural proof of God's existence" (p. 3). As long as the Jews endure, it can be demonstrated and even seen that He is the God of fidelity. But the same God who once spoke to the fathers through the prophets, speaks now to the Jewish people through His Son.

If a man, Jew or Gentile, hears the word of the Cross and answers it, then forgiving grace and mercy and righteousness are his. If his response is negative, or if the word has never been addressed to him as to a distinct person, then he may be a member of the Synagogue or of the Church but he is not part of the Israel of God (see pp. 136–138).

Obviously, this distinction between the Church and the Israel of God, which plays a considerable role in Dr. Jocz's theology, is not a Catholic one. For him there is sanctification neither through descent from Abraham nor through membership in the Church. Both are accidents of birth or of politics, as in the case of mass conversions under warrior kings like Clovis; neither has any scriptural warrant for providing membership in the Israel of God. One enters that holy community only by individual vocation and response; even as early as Abraham's day, man's answer to God's call was a matter altogether personal. Dr. Jocz thus has no patience with "Semitic totality thinking," as it applies to membership in Israel according to the flesh or to corporate sanctification in Christ.

Excellent though his emphasis on the need for individual surrender is, he seems not to understand the interplay between person and community in the realm of grace. One becomes a Christian, not merely by faith, not merely by personal submission, but also by the sacrament of rebirth which makes one a living stone in the temple of God, a member of Christ's Mystical Body, a fellow in the Communion of Saints. The Church and a person's faith in Christ are not related to each other as are a man and his clothing; the intimate link between the

individual believer and the family of the faithful is like that of cell and tissue. The many and varied cells of a human body are what they are and have life, because they belong to an organism. The Church is the organism of grace.

When Dr. Jocz speaks of the Church, he is likely to think of what he calls the "Gentile Church," a church in constant danger of forgetting her connection with Israel and of assuming that she has "succeeded where Israel has failed" (pp. 3-4). He seems very much aware of Christendom's record of twenty centuries of failure to love or to comprehend apostolic teaching. The concept of the Church as a divine institution, as Christ in the world, however, leaves him uneasy, for it gives the appearance of an institutional triumph. Consequently, when describing all those transformed by the message of the Cross, he much prefers to call them "the People of God" or "the Israel of God." He is not especially distressed by the fact that those born anew should belong to a visible Church, in fact he rather expects it. As long as they are aware that the Church is prone to all the false values of the Synagogue, they are, he feels, amply warned. It is in this spirit that he writes:

Church and Synagogue overlap constantly, there is no rigid division between them. Outwardly, Church and Synagogue as institutions are completely separate; inwardly, Church and Synagogue as a relationship to God have no set frontier. . . . The Christian becomes a Jew whenever he lives by works and not by grace; the Jew becomes a Christian whenever he despairs of his own righteousness and throws himself upon the mercy of the righteous God. The Christ who is hidden to the Synagogue becomes visible to the Jewish man as he seeks for a token of God's forgiving grace (p. 6).

For one thing, this passage makes clear that Dr. Jocz has nothing in common with those who hold that, while the Law is God's word to the sons of Abraham according to the flesh, the Gospel is His word to the Gentiles, and to the Gentiles only (see p. 184). As he rejects the "two-way" theory that would make Jesus the Messiah of the nations alone, so too is he out of sympathy with the view that the "Hebrew Christian" has a favored position because the Jews were called first (see pp. 179-188). Although many of his expressions seem at first sight to say the opposite, Dr. Jocz holds no more on this point than

does St. Paul. With both St. Peter and St. Paul, he repeats that God is no respecter of persons, no God of bias (see Ac 10:34 and Rom 2:11). The "Hebrew Christian" has no singularity among the people of God other than the unavoidable one of greater proximity to the story of revelation: "In respect of history, there is a difference between Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ, though theologically there is none" (p. 180).

Unless I misunderstand the author, the witness the Jewish convert gives to God's saving work in Christ is a special one, just as is the witness of the Gentile, that quondam worshipper of idols or of the God of reason. Still, at times one gets the impression that the role he actually assigns to the Jewish convert is that of the conscience of the Church, ever calling her back to her pristine obedience, ever reminding her that "the Lord God is no man's debtor" and that she lives only by grace (see pp. 187-188). This notion of a unique calling within the Church seems to be based on the supposition that the Jewish convert has a familiarity with the gratuitous character of the order of grace that others cannot experience. This is open to serious doubt.

If Dr. Jocz's terminology often sounds aggressively evangelistic, I do not think it is essentially so. Although in his choice of phrase and argument he appears Lutheran and Barthian by turns, he would probably maintain that his soteriology is Pauline and Augustinian, which for this writer is to say, Christian and Catholic. None but the smallest reservation need be made against his theology of grace and faith, or against that of Jesus' atonement which makes both possible. Whoever grants that the authors of the Letter to the Hebrews and of the Apocalypse were Jews, like St. Paul, who knew the meaning of the Temple and its sacrifices, and the mediatory role of a priesthood within a nation that was priestly, will also grant that the author's description of the way in which the Jewish man enters into the Israel of God by faith in the sacrificial and saving death of Jesus of Nazareth, does not transgress biblical categories.

According to Dr. Jocz, "propitiation by sacrifice, mediation by the priesthood, imputed holiness by the shedding of sacrificial blood" are basic concepts of the Old Covenant (p. 38). Rabbinical Judaism abandoned them. The study of the Law, especially those parts referring to the sacrifices, served as a substitute for the sacrifices themselves, and the vacuum created by the loss of the Temple after the destruction

in 70 A.D. was never truly filled. Instead, a virtual apotheosis of the Law took its place (see p. 94). While originally Israel's way and worship were historical, propitiatory, and mediatory, Judaism became legalistic when at its lowest and mystical when at its highest. "By accepting the principle of *direct* approach to God, [Judaism] has by-passed the basic principles upon which Old Testament faith was founded. This is the point of departure between Church and Synagogue" (p. 38; see also p. 87). The Church, on the contrary, holds fast to the great visions of the Old Testament. The principles of mediation, rites commemorative of historical redemption, and most important of all, the election of Israel as a totally unmerited grace—now become universal according to the prophetic promise—all these are Israel's legacy to her.

Whenever the Synagogue considered the election of Israel, the mark of which is the Torah, to be self-merited, or whenever it viewed the Torah as an immutable and permanent code, conformity with which brought sanctification of itself, then the Old Testament was betrayed. For it was a religion of promise, of unmerited choice, of encounter with a Person through the medium of the word and of sacrifice. From this order of grace and encounter, the New Testament never deviates; hence it embodies a better comprehension of the religion of Israel than that which has survived in the Synagogue.

According to the rabbis, commitment to the Law makes the difference between Israel and the nations. To comply with God's will, a Gentile needs only to keep the basic laws of morality, whereas a son of the Covenant has special obligations. "A proselyte chooses to keep the Torah, a Jew has no choice" (p. 65). It is, then, a revolutionary way of closing the gap between the two when St. Paul declares that "in Christ Jesus there is *no* difference between Greek and Jew" (p. 66). Yet, though the reconciliation by the Cross is above the Law, it does not negate the Law; if it did, God would be unfaithful to His promise, and this is inconceivable. What has actually happened to the Law, the holy and righteous command that reveals sin but neither overcomes nor bars it? It has been brought to its *telos*, its end or completion, which is Christ (see Rom 10:4). Though negative in its function, it has come to a positive conclusion. "It 'ends' in [Jesus the Messiah] because it is fulfilled in him, because its original purpose is accomplished in him" (p. 71).

Dr. Jocz finds much of the traditional Christian apologetic on the place of the Law in New Testament times both inadequate and based upon wrong premises. St. Paul and the author of the Letter to the Hebrews had a correct view of it, a view already lost by the Epistle of Barnabas, by Justin the Martyr, and by some other patristic writings. Instead of seeing the Law "fulfilled" (Jesus' own words in Mt 5:17), they saw it abrogated. According to St. Cyprian, the Law of Moses ceased with the reign of Christ, and the New Law was given. Origen eliminated the terms of the Mosaic Law by interpreting them allegorically. The net effect of this failure to see an irrevocable divine commitment "fulfilled" is to see the gospel merely as another law, complementary to the first. But the gospel is not a new law, not the "Law of Christ"; it is rather the good news of God's universal love, "the Gospel of Grace" (p. 74). In it, the promise given to Abraham of a blessing that will cover all the nations of the earth (see Gen 22:18) is come true.

"Man cannot save himself, but he can submit by ceasing to resist salvation. *Metanoia* is a moral miracle, not a magical or mechanical experience. God gives his Holy Spirit, but only to those who ask for him (Lk 11:13)." It is by God's gracious gift that man is saved; still, man must live in hope. For history means suspense; over it there is written an invisible "not yet" (p. 77). Together with creation groaning and travailing, those who are the "first fruits of the Spirit" wait for the final redemption, for God's last and ultimate word (see p. 78). To the rabbis, the messianic age is history improved, "a revised edition of what is now" (p. 79). What the Christian expects, however, is not an "improved world" but "a new heaven and a new earth." He who is a new creature in Christ knows that he already lives in the New Age. He does not look so much for the benefits of that age as for God's kingdom-to-come in the glorious return of a Person. This *telos*, this point beyond history, is "the New World Order—and yet salvation begins here and now!" (p. 81).

If Dr. Jocz's position is correct, the polarity is not between the Synagogue and the Church, the Synagogue being related to the Old Testament only indirectly. For there was a time when the Synagogue was not, and there will be a time when the Synagogue will be no more (see p. 95). The polarity is really between the Jewish people, which transcends the limitations of the Synagogue, and the Church. There

can be no doubt that between the Israel of the Sinaitic Covenant and the Israel of the fuller Covenant sealed on Calvary there is perfect continuity, for the latter is the completion of the former. "Old" Testament and "New" are thus terms that can be misunderstood. They must not be taken as implying a defeat of God's purpose and His need to start all over again. In one way, there was a new beginning, the Incarnation; in another, the newness of the New Covenant is "a renewal of the old, only on a more permanent basis" (p. 115). Such is Dr. Jocz's understanding of the irrefragable promise of a new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

As far as God is concerned the Covenant with Israel stands: the emphasis upon the lasting value of the Covenant recurs in Jeremiah (cf. Jer 32:40; 50:5) and in the other Prophets (cf. Ez 37:26; Is 55:3). So far, then, as the Old Testament is concerned, the "new" Covenant is not new *ab initio*, but only a renewal of the old (pp. 115-116).

Since the Church at her most perfect is identical with the Israel according to the spirit, she may never abandon the historic Israel, the Israel according to the flesh. To do so would be a betrayal of God's promises. With fine insight, Dr. Jocz remarks:

If Israel were able to elude his destiny and to turn his back upon God once and for all, it would mean that man had the last word and that God was defeated. If this were the case there would be little hope for humanity, for in Israel's destiny is involved the destiny of mankind. This is an important point and lies behind St. Paul's reasoning in Romans. St. Paul, like the Prophets, is carried by the conviction that at no point in history is Israel an end in himself. In Israel's election God chooses mankind. If God, then, were to leave Israel to himself until he is ready to accept free grace, there is no hope for the rest of humanity. The answer is that we must take God's calling more seriously than Israel's refusal (p. 109).

In a way, the last sentence is the key phrase of the book. If the Church is to have a theology of election that takes its life from the New Testament, it must concentrate on God's call, as Scripture does. To look at the question the Israel according to the flesh poses, only in terms of her refusal—however long it may last—is to act the Pelagian, to make man the determiner of God. The primary factor in Israel's and man's destinies, however, is not their willing or their running but God's mercy (see Rom 9:16), for what He holds out is an "election of grace"

(see Rom 11:5). All who accept this "last secret of God's inscrutable judgement" (p. 111) become the remnant that is saved here and now. In the eschatological future, all Israel will be saved, but in the present, only those who personally experience the salvation of the Lord. Dr. Jocz does not seem to consider what Catholic theology calls baptism by desire: that the Holy Spirit and His sanctifying grace may dwell in those who, in the words of Pope Pius XII, are related to the Mystical Body of the Redeemer by some unconscious yearning and desire, even though they are deprived of many precious gifts and helps from heaven, which can be enjoyed only in union with Christ in the Church (see *Mystici Corporis*, Washington: N.C.W.C., 1943, p. 64). His main concern is with conscious, lively faith in Jesus as the Lord.

One must appreciate Dr. Jocz's exegesis of the universality-texts of both Testaments, though one can hardly follow him in the assumption that the Septuagint was a translation made for the use of the Gentiles, in fact, that it was a Jewish missionary effort (see pp. 100-101). He also adopts the somewhat singular view that *riza hagia*, the "root" of Romans 11:16, is the Christ, not the patriarchs from whose stock He springs.¹ Is not *risbon*, "the first one or the beginning," among the titles given to the Messiah by the rabbis? he asks. This title, he thinks, may be a clue to the meaning of some manuscripts of John 8:25 which make Jesus say: "I am the beginning, I who speak to you." What God does "for the sake of the fathers," Dr. Jocz tells us, He does, not to reward their fidelity but to reveal His own (see pp. 104-106). The pre-existent Messiah is the root of Jesse; thus the sequence of the history of salvation is Messiah-Israel-the nations. The Gentiles are the wild shoots grafted into the olive tree that is Israel, the tree whose root is the Messiah (see pp. 113-114). Indeed, Jesus is in His own person the whole of Israel, root and branch. "Where Israel failed, the Messiah succeeds; what Israel was meant to be, the Messiah is—the perfect Servant of God" (p. 106). Dr. Jocz's exegesis of St. Paul's reference to "the holy root" does not seem to be supported by the context of the passage of which it is a part, but his general outlook—disregarding his Protestant bias against merit—is very much that of the Apostle.

1. This is the view of Origen in his *Commentarium in Epist. B. Pauli ad Romanos*, VIII, 11 (PG 14:1193). For patristic interpretations of St. Paul's meaning, see Myles M. Bourke, *A Study of the Metaphor of the Olive Tree in Romans XI* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), pp. 72-76, 89-93.

St. Paul is the theologian of harmony between Jews and Gentiles—this no careful reader of his epistles will ever deny. The Synagogue, however, cultivates its separateness from the nations; it feels little, if any, responsibility for them, and not seeking the nations of the world, it cannot be the Israel of God. Concern for the Gentile world is the hallmark of Old Testament faith. Sacrifice on its behalf and vicarious suffering have their solid foundation in the Old Testament vision of Israel's relationship to the Gentiles; she needs them and they need her because of the things God has entrusted to her for transmission to them. Moreover, in her suffering, "although little understood by the Jews themselves [she] keeps the Messiah and his people in an intimate relationship, for he is the co-sufferer with all suffering humanity" (p. 153). The persecution the Jews have had to suffer at the hands of Christians ("the pagan in the Gentile," is Dr. Jocz's phrase) is at bottom often Gentile rebellion against the Son of David who died on the cross for the sins of all.

Jew-hatred, in the last resort, is mutiny against God and his Anointed (cf. Ps 2). The very presence of the Jewish people serves to emphasize the link with the past and brings the Cross into the perspective of actuality. Jesus ceases to be a myth and becomes a challenging and embarrassing fact (p. 153).

He is an embarrassment to Christians who prefer to forget His link to His own people. He is an embarrassment to Jews as well; indeed, He is one to all the world.

For the Synagogue, therefore, Jesus is on a par with all the other false Messiahs who have appeared in Jewish history from time to time. And yet even the most critically minded Jew has to admit that in view of world history Jesus stands in a place of his own. He is a unique phenomenon and does not fit into the pattern of messianic pretenders either Jewish or Gentile. He stands not only before Israel but also before the world as the corrective of all false messianic idealism. As far as the Jews are concerned he is the great question-mark of his people's conscience. In the vicissitudes of Israel's pilgrimage through history as God's chosen people, the encounter with Jesus, his greatest Son, reopens the issue again and again. Jesus of Nazareth remains historic Israel's greatest challenge (p. 16).

In his carefully argued work, Dr. Jocz has done Christian theology a service. There are times when one might wish his phrasing a little

modified so that his Jewish brothers would not be wounded needlessly. A constant source of regret, too, is his apparent unfamiliarity with Catholic theological writings. The contributions of Martin Luther and Karl Barth do not make the Catholic Christian position on grace and the relation of the two Testaments unworthy of attention. Though admirable, Dr. Jocz's volume leaves one with the conviction that in it the Christian message has been represented only partially to a people who must see it whole if they are to see it as the crowning of the love with which He called them.

GERARD S. SLOYAN

Harry A. Wolfson:

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS *

FROM the outset, Professor Harry A. Wolfson's long-awaited *Philosophy of the Church Fathers* promised to be a major contribution to the rapidly expanding universe of patristic studies. Although the Fathers were primarily "sowers of the divine word," as St. Augustine once called them, it has become fashionable in recent times to study them as philosophers. Yet, except for Ueberweg-Geyer's standard work, *Die patristische und scholastische Philosophie*, now in its thirteenth edition, the first three chapters of Etienne Gilson's more popular *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, and some brief but suggestive pages added, *in extremis*, to Emile Bréhier's *Histoire de la philosophie*, there are few works dealing with the philosophy of the patristic period as a whole.

Before Professor Wolfson went to work, no one had attempted to treat the subject in a topical and exhaustive manner; any effort to fill this lacuna was thus bound to win the applause and gratitude of patristic scholars and historians of philosophy alike. The undertaking was all the more promising since the author is a distinguished and internationally known scholar. Until his retirement in 1958, he occupied the Nathan Littauer Chair of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy at Harvard for many years, and his extensive researches in the field of religious philosophy, which include an earlier work in two volumes on Philo (1947), acquainted him well with much of the intellectual background of the Fathers.

Lest the reader be misled by the title of the book, he should be warned that by "philosophy" Professor Wolfson, unlike most contemporary scholars, does not mean the body of purely rational truths that may be extracted from the works of the Fathers. As the subtitle "Faith, Trinity, Incarnation" suggests, his chief concern is with the

* *Volume I: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

great dogmas of Christianity as found in the writings of the early ecclesiastical authors. The way he uses "philosophy" is more akin to the usage by many of the Fathers themselves when they contrasted their own philosophy or wisdom with the philosophy or wisdom of the pagans. It is akin to what the pagan adversaries of St. John Chrysostom meant when they questioned the value of "Christian philosophy" since many lukewarm catechumens postponed their baptism until the approach of death for reasons of self-interest (see *First Homily on the Acts*, PG 60:23).

More precisely, Professor Wolfson has chosen to deal with the theological formulation of Christian doctrines by means of concepts borrowed from pagan philosophy. His subject, in a word, is the rise of scientific theology during the first centuries of the Church, and as such it is a timely and important one. One may form some idea of the issues involved by pondering the following concrete example. When in his answer to Jesus' question: "But who do you say that I am?" St. Peter replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:15-16), he marveled at the wonder of Jesus; ever since, belief in His divinity and humanity has remained fundamental to all orthodox Christianity. Less than a century later, after the Docetists had questioned the reality of Christ's manhood, St. Ignatius of Antioch professed the same fundamental truth by saying: "There is only one physician, of flesh and of spirit, generate and ingenerate, God in man, true life in death, Son of Mary and Son of God, first passible then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Ad Ephes.* 7). More elaborate than Peter's simple confession, this statement brings out clearly some of the implications of the primitive *kerygma*, of the good news of God's love, and represents one of the first attempts at theological inquiry.

Upon closer examination, however, it may be shown that St. Ignatius has hardly done more than bring together, within the compass of a single sentence, a number of ideas scattered throughout the books of the New Testament. His declaration may in turn be compared to the pronouncement of the Council of Chalcedon on the same subject: "In one and the same Christ . . . must be acknowledged two natures without commingling, without change, without division, inseparable . . . joined together in one Person and subsistence" (Denz. 148). One senses immediately that the definition of the Council is not a mere restatement of Scripture but a new formulation of its views on Jesus

of Nazareth, which draws extensively upon the technical vocabulary of contemporary philosophy. Whereas St. Ignatius had not used a single nonbiblical expression, none of the words in the lines just quoted occurs in Scripture, and all of them can be traced back to a definite source in Greek philosophy. By its formal precision, the Chalcedonian doctrine could satisfy the requirements of the philosophically trained mind and forestall future heresies. At the same time, there is little doubt, at least in the mind of a Christian, that this doctrine coincides with the teaching of the gospel concerning the dual nature of Christ.

Professor Wolfson is, of course, well aware of the fact that the Fathers were not of one mind on the status of pagan literature and learning in the Church. Many of the more conservative among them emphatically denounced all philosophers as the "patriarchs of heretics"; they viewed any *rapprochement* between the "wisdom of God" and the "wisdom of the world" as a reckless and perverse attempt to dilute the wine of the gospel with the water of secular philosophy. There is no denying that the misguided use of philosophy has often led to heresy. Nevertheless, it soon became apparent that the answer to a bad philosophy was not "No philosophy!" but a good one. In his onslaught against the philosophers, even Tertullian, the most outspoken representative of the antiphilosophic tradition, had refurbished and then used the arms of philosophy, thereby intimating that an adjustment between the rival claims of Jerusalem and Athens was possible.

The way in which the reconciliation was effected is examined by Professor Wolfson in the important chapters dealing with Alexandrian allegorism and the single and double faith theories. The metaleptic mode of interpretation, inherited from Philo, led Clement and Origen to discover in the secret and hidden teaching of Scripture the explicit teaching of philosophy itself. Agar, Abraham's Egyptian slave, and the foreign woman mentioned in Proverbs personify philosophy or encyclical culture (read the "liberal arts"), both now joyfully introduced into the fold as captives of Christ; the five barley loaves and the two fishes of the Gospels emerge as the Law of Moses and Greek philosophy, respectively. The author traces this nonliteral exegesis to the midrashic interpretation of the Old Testament employed by the rabbis of Palestinian Judaism and, through Philo, to the allegorical interpretation of the poets practiced by the Greek, especially the Stoic, philosophers. He has unfortunately neglected much of the new material made

available since the discovery of the Qumran scrolls, and in general has a tendency to undervalue the originality of Christian hermeneutics. He deserves much credit, however, for reminding us again that in the works of Philo, Origen, and their followers the spiritual sense of Scripture does not entail a rejection of the literal sense. His remarks will be appreciated even more if we recall that Dom Capelle once had to write a scholarly article in order to prove that St. Ambrose did not really mistake Abraham for God the Father.

The central portion of the book examines, at great length, what the author considers the three crucial mysteries of Christianity, namely, the Trinity, the Generation of the Son—which the Fathers were careful not to confuse with the generations of the pagan gods or with the Philonic belief in the creation of the *logos* from nothing—and the Incarnation. The work ends appropriately with a discussion of Gnosticism, defined by Wolfson as “the verbal Christianizing of paganism” (p. 503), and with a rapid survey of various heretical doctrines.

The foregoing remarks hardly suffice to give the reader an inkling of the rich diversity of Professor Wolfson’s book. One can only admire the breadth of an undertaking that ranges from the New Testament authors to St. John of Damascus, the last of the Fathers, and that strives to set forth the doctrines of Christians and pagans, of orthodox writers and heretics, without undue simplification and in a language that remains sober and lucid throughout. Origen’s remark that nothing “useless or superfluous” is to be found in sacred Scripture might apply to Wolfson himself. His erudition is staggering yet easy, there are no rhetorical trappings, no “niceties” of style. The formal structure of the book adheres to a uniform pattern: The author begins each section with a statement of his thesis, presented as a working hypothesis, which he proceeds to substantiate by means of numerous texts taken from the works of the Fathers. The results of the inquiry are then summed up neatly in the final paragraphs of each chapter.

Care has been taken to state the position of each author in his own terms. The quotations have been judiciously chosen for their illustrative value and, happily, no effort has been made to provide an exhaustive inventory of references, since such a catalogue would only have cluttered the exposition and obscured the drift of the argument. Nor is Professor Wolfson content with merely relating the contents of the works studied. Adopting what the Preface describes as a “hy-

pothetico-deductive method," he strives to reconstruct each author's thought, to bring out its latent implications, and to derive its significance. This task was all the more formidable since the diverse intellectual currents of the age tend to merge and constitute a kind of philosophic *koinē*, in which the individual components at times tend to lose their identity. As befits an endeavor of this kind, the tone is serene and unimpassioned from beginning to end. The author is obviously not interested in taking up cudgels against any of his colleagues; throughout his book he has left the spotlight squarely on the Fathers themselves.

Still one suspects that, for all its impeccable methodology, aided by a flair for the relevant which comes only with years of experience, all is not well with the state of Professor Wolfson's scholarship. He himself seems to have anticipated adverse criticism, for he has made a feeble attempt to forestall it in his Preface. Not all readers will agree that when St. Paul speaks of the Trinity he refers to a trinity existing after the Resurrection (see p. 167), that the idea of the Incarnation, conceived as a supernatural birth, is foreign to the Apostle (see p. 174), that he equates the pre-existent Christ with the Holy Spirit (see p. 175), that the difference between the Spirit who proceeds and the Son who is generated is only a verbal one (see p. 256), or that when Christian theologians call God "Father" in relation to the *Logos*, they imply that "He is its material cause" (p. 293). Because Christian writers speak of the Son as being generated by the Father, Wolfson hastily concludes that the Father enjoys a priority of nature, that there is a distinction of cause and effect between the Persons of the Trinity, and that the Persons differ specifically from one another (see pp. 308–309, 315). His desire to lay bare the inner meaning of certain texts sometimes leads him to read new meanings into them as when, in his account of the relation between the Father and the Son, he substitutes the word "cause" for the word "order," which the Fathers preferred for obvious reasons (see pp. 309, 330, 358).

Just what the author means by the pseudo-Aristotelian "specific genus" mentioned on several occasions in connection with the Trinity (see pp. 322, 325, *passim*) remains unclear to this reviewer. More sweeping still is his assertion that the work of the Fathers consisted in "recasting . . . Christian beliefs in the form of a philosophy . . . thereby producing . . . a Christian version of Greek philosophy"

(p. vi). He is on more solid ground when he begins to trace the steps by which the Fathers finally arrived at an adequate formulation of the dogma of the Incarnation, even if he has little or nothing to say about the idea that homogenizes most of what they wrote or thought concerning this mystery: God's abiding love for fallen man and His desire to rescue him from the power of the devil, of sin, and of death. According to Professor Wolfson, the union of the two natures in Christ "reduces itself to the use of the analogy of [the] Aristotelian conception of the unity of matter and form" (p. 373; cf. p. 407). But Aristotle's theory views matter and form as two incomplete substances combining in such a way as to constitute a single nature. As such it is essentially monophysitic, and one fails to see how it could be of much help in the present case. Recent studies have shown that the analogy employed by the Fathers is the Neoplatonic notion of "unconfused union," according to which two complete natures come together to form a single being without undergoing any alteration.

Unfortunately, Professor Wolfson devotes but little attention to Neoplatonism. This constant, almost systematic, neglect of the most important philosophical movement of the later patristic period may be one of the more serious shortcomings of his book. Equally worrisome is the total lack of concern for the form of the works studied. Patristic literature is like a coat of many colors and ranges all the way from popular sermons—intended for simple, not to say illiterate, audiences—to treatises of the highest scientific value. The Church fathers had understood from the start that they, too, must be all to all men. Just as Jesus had adapted His teaching to His listeners, so they made every effort to be understood by everyone. Truth in the end may be one, but it cannot be presented exactly in the same manner to all men. Indeed, as St. Augustine pointed out, certain truths should be withheld altogether from persons who, either through natural inability or lack of training, are incapable of grasping them properly and stand little chance of deriving any benefit from them. Not only error but truth itself can be harmful. Origen, who was not one to underestimate the power of folly, thought that to speak about God was always fraught with danger. The greater a man's respect for his hearers and for the truth, the more circumspect he will be when called upon to discuss grave issues before the general public.

All this is to say that it would be rash to expose an author's thought

without first determining where one should look for it. There is every reason to believe that the Fathers were far more subtle in their approach to the great theological truths than modern scholarship, on the whole, is willing to concede. A genuine appreciation of this fact might shed a flood of light on the would-be contradictions and inconsistencies with which they have often been taxed. Instead of searching their works for implications of which they themselves were unaware, Professor Wolfson could have devoted more time to uncovering the doctrines of which they were fully aware, even if, for prudential reasons, they felt obliged to present them under the subtle disguise of rhetoric. This reader, at any rate, would feel much more secure if he was convinced that the interpretations offered him rested upon a thorough and painstaking analysis of each work, and not merely upon a sampling of quotations wrested from their natural habitat, possibly disfigured or thrown out of focus by this very fact.

What the student who reads the early Christian writers as the first witnesses to a great and living tradition will resent even more is the merciless dissection to which their works have been subjected. Under Professor Wolfson's microscope, the Fathers, who were men of extraordinary vitality, are shed of all but the last drop of blood. Even such giants as Origen and St. Augustine emerge as skeletons, never to be restored to the unity of breathing life. Of the existential and confrontational aspects of their writings, not even the slightest hint is given. One may object that such aspects do not lie within the scope of the book. Still, given the dynamic quality of patristic literature, it is doubtful that the surgical operation performed by the author is fully justified. If this is the price of scholarship, it is a heavy one indeed. As long as the world of the Fathers continues to be haunted by the ghost of nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft*, it is not likely to arouse much enthusiasm in the heart of the modern reader.

Professor Wolfson knows this only too well, and he has long since resigned himself to it. He is a scholar writing for other scholars whose appreciation he has learned to value more highly than the plaudits of the multitude. His peers will admire his integrity as a researcher and the boldness of his enterprise. But, at times, they may disagree with his method; they may be quick to point out that some of his efforts have miscarried; on a number of unverified hypotheses they are likely to withdraw their vote of confidence; often they may be tempted to insert

his most valid remarks into an entirely different framework. In the end, all this may simply be another way of acknowledging their personal debt to him, and of proclaiming the value of his contribution to our knowledge of the intellectual aspects of the early Christian centuries.

ERNEST L. FORTIN, A.A.

To Thee I Turn

*When all within is dark,
And former friends misprise;
From them I turn to Thee,
And find Love in Thine eyes.*

*When all within is dark,
And I my soul despise;
From me I turn to Thee,
And find Love in Thine eyes.*

*When all Thy face is dark,
And Thy just angers rise;
From Thee I turn to Thee,
And find Love in Thine eyes.*

(This gem of sacred poetry is by Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Spanish philosopher and poet of the eleventh century. The translation from the original Hebrew is by Israel Abrahams. The last stanza with its appeal from God's anger to His love is typical of Jewish mysticism.)

NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

HOLY SCRIPTURE is generally quoted in accordance with the Confraternity version of the Bible, though in a few instances our contributors have used their own renderings. Occasionally "Yahweh," the Ineffable Name in the Jewish tradition, is retained even though the Confraternity version, following the Septuagint, uses "Lord." In Dr. Barry Ulanov's essay, "The Song of Songs: The Rhetoric of Love," quotations from the Song are according to the Douay version, with the exception of those passages in which the author quotes from the translations of the works he discusses. His essay, incidentally, is part of a large-scale work in progress: a systematic investigation of the whole rhetorical tradition associated with the Canticle of Canticles. In quotations from Jewish authors, rabbinical texts, or the Jewish prayer book, their wording, usually that of the version of the Jewish Publication Society, is preserved.

No matter which translation of Scripture is used, chapter and verse are cited in accordance with the Confraternity version. Wherever a psalm is given two numerals, the first refers to the numbering of psalms in the Vulgate, the second to the current Hebrew text. The abbreviations of the titles of biblical books are those of *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. B. Orchard, O.S.B. (London: Nelson, 1953). In transliterations of Hebrew and Greek, no attempt has been made to render all the complexities of the original. The system followed for Hebrew is, in general, that of *The Jewish Encyclopedia*; the system followed for Greek is, with minor modifications, that of Webster's *New International Dictionary*. Biblical names are given in that English form most closely approximating the Hebrew.

Dame Mirjam Prager's "Israel in the Parables," Professor Herbert Haag's "Three Voices at Basel," and Ernst Fuchs's commentary on his painting were translated by the Editor, as were the words of Pope John XXIII and of the German bishops in the Introduction. The renderings of the letters of Cardinal Frings and Cardinal Liénart, as well as the excerpts from *Kirchen-Zeitung für das Erzbistum Köln* in "The Swastika Reappears," are also the work of the Editor. Father Stanislas Lyonnet's "St. Paul: Liberty and Law" was translated by Father Joseph Brennan, the comments of Israeli newspapers in "Israeli Reactions" by Miss Josephine D. Casgrain from a privately issued French survey.

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Continued from front flap

the teachings of St. Paul as well as in rabbinical literature. Essays on the Spanish Inquisition, the veneration of the Torah by the popes of the Middle Ages, the Jewish marriage rite, the religious dilemma of Franz Werfel, and the face of Boris Pasternak develop the theme further.

Among the contemporary topics Volume IV discusses are the statement of the German bishops on the Eichmann trial, the Catholic response to the reappearance of the Swastika on synagogues during 1959, Israeli reactions to the changes in the Good Friday liturgy of the Church, and a report on three days of theological conversations among Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic scholars at Basel in 1958. The love here treated in its many aspects compels Christians and Jews to understand and to love each other. It ought to build a bridge.

THE EDITOR:

Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher was born in Austria. Among the major influences of his youth were Martin Buber, Ferdinand Ebner, Søren Kierkegaard, Dostoevski, and Cardinal Newman. Thus many currents of thought flow together in him, making his editorship of *THE BRIDGE* a particularly fitting charge. At present, Monsignor Oesterreicher is Director of the Institute of Judaic-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University and Consultor to one of the preparatory commissions for the Second Vatican Council.

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